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ROMAN CATHOLICISM.

**LOYOLA COLLEGE  
MONTREAL**

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ROMAN CATHOLICISM,

OLD AND NEW,

FROM THE STANDPOINT OF

THE INFALLIBILITY DOCTRINE,

BY

JOHN SCHULTE, D.D., PH. D.,

*Rector of Port Burwell, Ont., Canada.*

LOYOLA COLLEGE  
MONTREAL

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## PREFACE.

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WHEN fifteen years ago I left the Church of Rome, it was expected that I should publish to the world my reasons for taking that important step. However just these expectations may have appeared to some, I was compelled to disappoint them, considering that controversy is not the field for a new convert, because it is apt to drive him to the opposite extreme, and to lead him to form in haste judgments which require the most mature consideration.

Besides, after the mental crisis through which I had passed and which lasted for some years, I felt that my mind needed rest, and that the anxieties of a religious controversy would rather disturb me in making progress in the cause of the truth. I still think that, instead of being beneficial to myself and others, it would have been detrimental in more than one respect.

My Roman Catholic friends must not think that it was fear of possible defeat that kept me from entering the arena of theological strife. When I took the final step of leaving the Roman communion I was fully convinced that I was doing what was right—following the

dictates of my conscience ; I believed also that I was able to defend what I had done.

But in truth the crisis was not yet over ; I was still battling with myself in more than one sense, and did not feel disposed to fight with those whom I esteemed as my former friends. I had passed only through the negative part of the crisis, throwing overboard what I considered erroneous in the Roman system, and even casting aside the very foundation of the whole structure, I mean the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church. I had made the final plunge out of Rome, without knowing where to land, and I found myself in the atmosphere of Protestantism which from my youth up I had been taught to hate, and whose divisions I scorned and abominated as signs of a self-willed and anti-Christian spirit. Surely, then, I was not in a fit state of mind to enter the field of controversy.

There were, besides, other powerful reasons which kept me in retirement. I had experienced the greatest kindness, not only from Roman Catholics individually, but from the Church itself. I remembered the happy years I had spent in the city of Rome. Propaganda College was to me a quiet retreat from the turmoils and cares of the world, and I gratefully thought of the pains which my kind-hearted superiors and professors had taken with my education. I had a high regard for Pius IX., not only for his amiable and Christian qualities, but also for his personal kindness to me. I found in the Bishop and clergy of the diocese where I laboured, as priest and professor, sincere and attached friends. I knew that the

step I had taken had erected, in their eyes, a painful barrier between us, and I was afraid that the heat of controversy would not only widen the breach, but degenerate into the bitterness and rancour of bigotry almost inseparable from religious polemics. With these feelings it is not to be wondered at that I shrank from the task of rushing into print and of needlessly arousing the ire of my former co-religionists.

And even though I had firmly rejected Romanism as such, the love of the truth often compelled me, both in private and public, to stand up as the champion of Roman Catholics and to defend them against the unfair attacks and prejudices of over-zealous Protestants. For, it cannot be denied that, although intelligent Protestants understand the fundamental errors of Rome, yet there are many things in that Church which are misunderstood by the general Protestant public.

My experience as layman, priest, and Divinity professor convinced me that all God has revealed to mankind is accepted by the Church of Rome; but my eyes were also opened to the fact that, in course of time, revealed truths had become incrusted and obscured by manifold errors. In a word, I had to distinguish and separate the purely *Roman* from the purely *Catholic*, rejecting the former and adhering to the latter.

And, in looking around me among the different Churches, I found that the Church of England professed to have followed the same process. This was the reason which, at that time, determined me to join her communion. I have laboured now, for the last thirteen years,

as a clergyman of that Church, and have never had occasion to regret the step I have taken. I united myself with her also, because I thought to find there a greater field of employment for my past experience, which might enable me, in my sphere, to stem the Rome-ward current within her pale. But I find that this current is more apparent than real ; it is rather a love for "*Catholicism*" than a tendency towards "*Romanism*." However, much that is contained in these pages may indirectly serve to correct some views and doctrines savouring of what I consider a mistaken Catholicism.

I am glad now that I kept silence during these many years. Having lived the life both of a consistent Roman Catholic and of a sincere Protestant, my experience on both sides, whilst it enables me to speak with mature judgment, entitles me also to be heard patiently by both parties.

What induces me to write at the present juncture is that I cannot resist the controversial current of our day. The atmosphere of the civilized world grows heavy with the momentous conflict. The movement is an important one, and pregnant with great results. The question, "*What is truth ?*" is re-echoed on all sides. All who are able to do so, are bound to look it squarely in the face. The very foundations of social and religious order are at stake. The minimizing defence of liberal Roman Catholics is here of no avail. Minimism is a vain refuge, and it cannot save Romanism in the great religious crisis upon which we appear to be entering.

I have endeavoured to treat the whole question in its entirety and to present it to the public in as brief a compass as possible. Although since the Vatican Council Roman Catholicism has been changed into popery pure and simple, yet I had to treat of Church-infallibility in all its extent, not only because it is the root of papal infallibility, but also because it is held by the liberal Catholics of all countries, the Old Catholics of Germany, and, in a modified form, though unconsciously, even by some Protestants. In this sense the reader will understand the title of this book.

In writing the work I have laboured under many difficulties. Not only does the pastoral charge of an extensive parish occupy nearly all my time, distracting the mind from literary labours ; but living in a secluded part of the country I have been deprived of all access to good libraries for consultation. However, the few works I have made use of are thoroughly reliable as to accuracy. Besides other historical works, I have consulted "*Mosheim's Church History*," which is admitted to be just and fair ; I am indebted to that excellent work, "*The Pope and the Council*, by Janus," for many data in regard to papal infallibility, and have found *Dr. Barrow's "Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy,"* to be a repertory of trustworthy authorities. I have endeavoured to acknowledge, in the proper places, the assistance derived from the different authors of whose works I have availed myself.

Although I am aware of the many imperfections of this little book, yet I trust that it may prove useful both

to Protestants and Roman Catholics, for whilst I refute errors, I endeavour also to establish the solid foundation of the truth.

J. SCHULTE.

*Port Burwell, August, 1875.*

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The Vatican decree transfers the gift of infallibility from the Church to the pope ; it ceases to be the same power. All the former safeguards in regard to definitions of faith are taken away. The pope in a different position in regard to princes and states. *La Chiesa sono io.* The pope's dogmatic definitions and decrees will greatly depend on his personal character. Pius IX. The pope's immediate surroundings influence his dogmatic utterances ; the *malaria* in the atmosphere of the Vatican. The Church will be completely *Italianized*. Twofold loyalty of Roman Catholics. Loyalty to the pope must prevail. The Vatican definition has changed the civil *status* of Roman Catholics. Dr. Newman's minimizing on this point contradicts the Roman system. The pope's interference in the administration of civil governments. Conflict between papal decrees and civil laws. Contest between the papacy and the German empire. The struggle in Italy. Nature of the rights for which the pope contends in all countries. His voice *must* have an influence on the loyalty of "the faithful." Change produced by the Vatican decrees in the standing of the episcopate. Reasons why the people continue to remain in spiritual slavery. .... Page 330

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## REVIEW OF THE RESTRICTIONS OF PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.

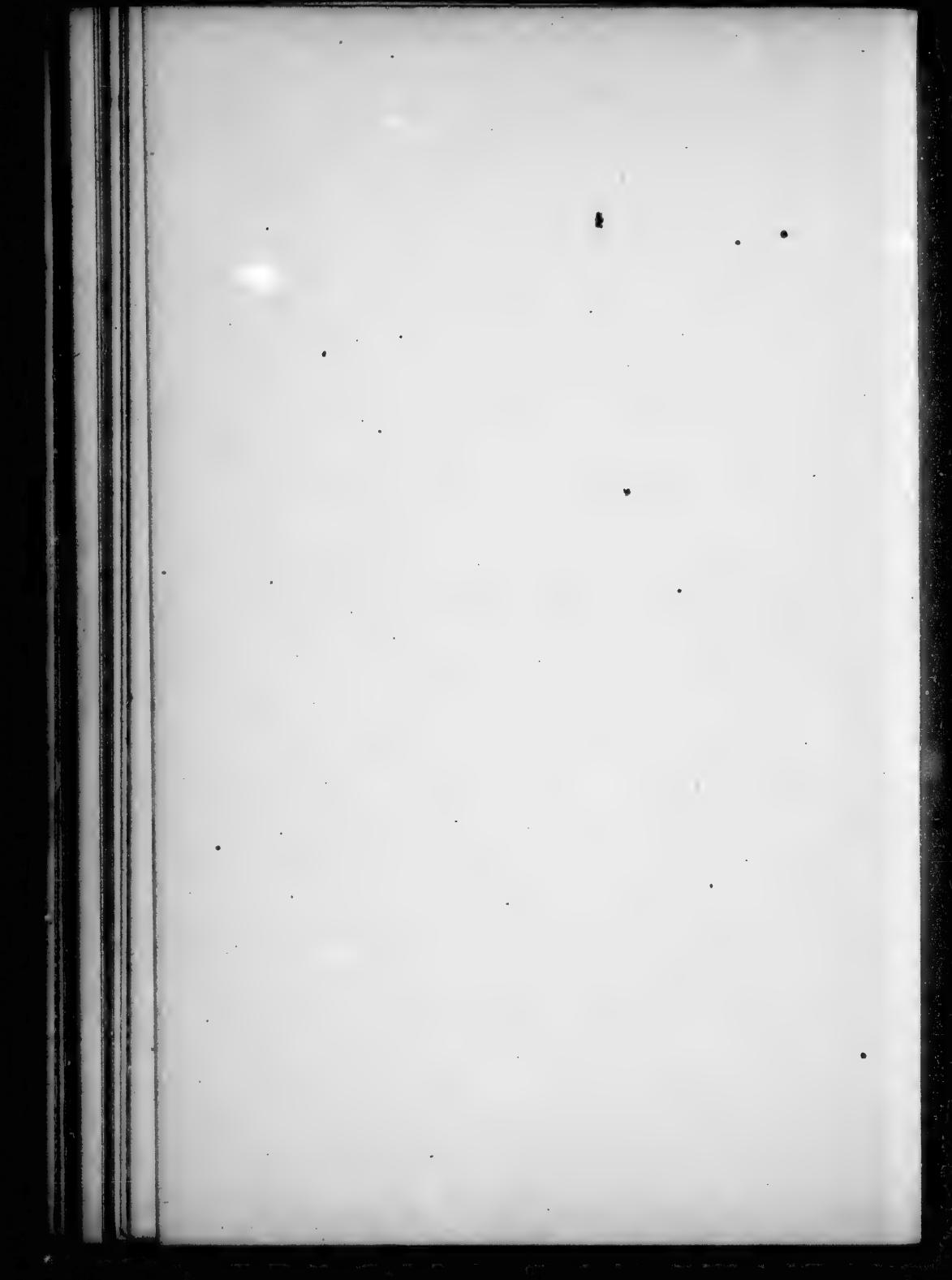
Dr. Newman, in comparing the *ex-cathedra* teaching with an ecumenical council contradicts his former assertion that "the pope has that same infallibility which the Church has." If the pope's infallibility be admitted at all, it must be unconditional and unlimited ; in the last analysis, it becomes a purely personal attribute. The expression *doctor privatus*, when used of a pope, is like talking of wooden iron. When does the pope speak *ex cathedra* ? Review of the four conditions adduced by Dr. Newman. The first condition is too limiting ; it contradicts the papal system. Is the pope the uni-

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versal teacher only when he addresses the whole Church? The second condition comprises more than they are willing to admit. The third condition is useless, as the pope himself has to draw the line between religious and secular matters. The fourth condition throws no new light on the subject. No choice left between infallibility pure and simple and repudiating it altogether..... *Page 342*

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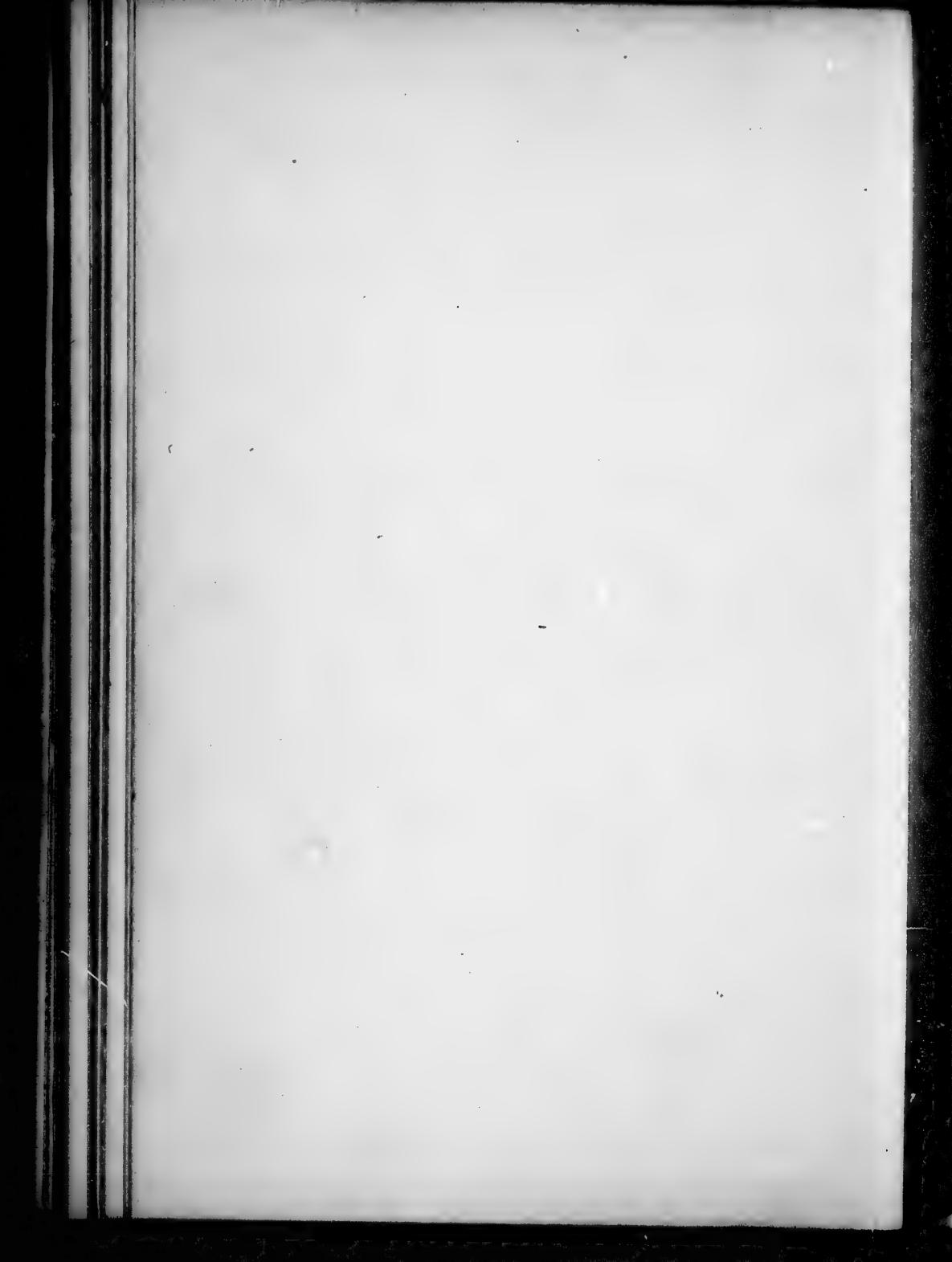
## **ROMAN CATHOLICISM.**



## PART I.

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*THE THEORY OF INFALLIBILITY IN REGARD  
TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.*



## LECTURE I.

### *INTRODUCTION.*

THERE is an institution in the religious world which greatly puzzles and perplexes the enlightened Protestant. This institution boasts a respectable antiquity, and, in some respects, a grand history which has often dazzled the scholar in many a brilliant episode. It possesses a vital power that, going beyond the comprehension of a merely superficial observer, displays its masterly ability by knowing how to make proselytes, and how to keep them within its bosom. Since its formal inauguration as a system, it has always been the most pretentious, as well as the most exclusive, ecclesiastical institution, embracing within its fold the greater part of Christendom, even amongst nations bitterly hostile to each other. Some of the best men and the noblest benefactors of mankind have been its humble adherents, and its members cling to it even to the verge of fanaticism. It is like a well disciplined and ably officered army presenting the appearance of an invincible phalanx. For every disposition of mind it makes room, and provides satisfaction for every taste. Its highly symbolic ritual has charms for the cultured as well as for the ignorant. The greatest masters of the liberal arts have been its willing servants. They have erected temples unsurpassed in architectural beauty and grandeur ; they have adorned them with impressive sculpture and painting, and enlivened them with sublime song and music. In a word,

this institution seems to have the wonderful gift of making its members contented and steadfast.

And yet the enlightened Protestant knows that this very institution is brimful of error and superstition ; that it perverts the most important truths of Christianity ; that in many cases it makes the Word of God of none effect by its traditions, and for the Word of God substitutes the word of man ; that its ritual symbolizes the greatest errors, so that its central worship is, if not formal, at least material idolatry ; and that its government is a spiritual despotism enslaving its members.

You are aware that I mean the Church of Rome. The reflecting Protestant is astonished at the phenomena which this Church presents to him. To his impartial judgment the many good points that she possesses are evident ; but the many evils also with which she is weighted stare him in the face in all their glaring deformity. He cannot understand why enlightened members of Rome should not perceive these defects, should not see what he sees and insist upon a thorough reformation of their Church, rejecting the error and retaining the truth. He cannot understand how enlightened Roman Catholics can possibly believe that in the mass, by the consecrating words of the priest, bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, and offered again by an earthly priest as a sacrifice for the living and dead ; how sensible and serious men can be attracted and deluded by so sensuous a worship, symbolizing, as it does, the grossest error. He cannot comprehend how free, enlightened men can believe in the extraordinary powers of the priesthood, and submit themselves humbly to a hierarchy claiming absolute spiritual sway. These and many other things in the Church of Rome the intelligent Protestant cannot understand.

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But what puzzles him still more is that talented men, men of standing in other denominations and in society, should leave their own Church and enter the Roman Communion.

I have not time here fully to explain this puzzling phenomenon. Each pervert to Rome has his own story to tell. Most of these men are dissatisfied with their Church and with Protestantism generally, and hope to find in Rome that which Rome lays claim to, namely, the old Catholicism which is based on the foundation of the Apostles. There is also a certain amount of rationalism in Roman theology. What else is the scholastic theology but rationalism with a pious tendency? Now, the learned men who have gone over to Rome are for the most part imbued with that philosophic and mystic rationalism by the aid of which Rome defends her errors. Such men are prone to recognize in the greatest Roman errors deep philosophical and theological truths. There can be no doubt also, that Rome has an imposing exterior ; truth and error are mixed together ; and this compound is embellished with all the refinement and beauty of poetry and the arts, and presented under a gorgeous ritual based upon a fallacious symbolism. No wonder, then, that men of a certain cast of mind are dazzled by the false light and caught in the net.

The literature of the Roman controversy is very extensive, for it would fill whole libraries ; but I think the good it has done, is by no means commensurate with its extent. More favourable results might have been expected, and in a number of cases it has done positive harm! As a rule, books of controversy written and published by Protestants do not reach Roman Catholics, since they are forbidden to possess or read them. Some have been written for political and party purposes, and consequently are calculated rather to excite

anger than to gain attentive consideration. Some have misinterpreted doctrines, and are regarded as calumnies and misrepresentations. Others again have been written in a bigoted spirit, and are met by them with a countervailing bigotry. Some are too learned for the popular mind, and others too shallow to deserve the attention of an intelligent Roman Catholic reader. So far as my own experience goes, I think that Roman Catholics are under the settled impression that, in our controversies with them, we do not treat them in a kind and Christian spirit, but rather approach them as enemies and in the spirit of bitterness. Hence even the well-meaning and truth-loving members of that Church are on their guard against us and our publications ; they look upon us with suspicion when we meet them in the arena of theological disputation, and well they may. Do not our best Protestant controversialists—men whom we regard as patterns in every Christian walk—seem to become inflated with bigotry and seized with an insane frenzy, so soon as they enter upon the field of controversy with Roman Catholics ? Is it not the settled custom to apply to the pope and the Roman Church the most opprobrious epithets ? Do they “ *speak the truth in love ?* ”

In treating with Roman Catholics, we must act justly, fairly and kindly. We should never lose sight of the fact that Rome has never denied Christ and that her fundamental doctrine of salvation is Christ and faith in Him ; that she possesses the Bible and reveres it as the Word of God. Moreover we cannot deny that Rome as a Church is zealous in good works. In our controversy with Rome, therefore, we should approach her with the deference due to a Christian Church. True, we believe that she teaches many erroneous doctrines ; but that should not, by any means, hinder us

from acting towards her with courteous consideration. Have not other Churches, too, gone astray? Yet we look upon them as Christian bodies and treat them with brotherly kindness. Why should we make an exception as regards the Church of Rome? Let us then "speak the truth in love." By this method we may the more easily convince our erring brethren and extend the kingdom of Christ and His truth. "*Speaking the truth in love*" shall be my motto in this course of lectures, especially as I know, from my own experience, that our Roman Catholic brethren are sensitive as to the manner, not less than the matter, of the controversy.

In all countries Roman assumptions appear to have received a new importance in our days. All Europe is ablaze with it. In Italy, a fierce struggle has been going on now for some years between the papacy and the new order of things. In Germany the very existence of the new empire seems to be staked on its final victory over ultramontanism. France, Spain and Austria have their religious excitements and controversies with Rome, and England has not escaped. The innovations of ritualism have kindled again the fire of her old religious struggles; and on the American continent, the atmosphere is lurid from a kindred cause. The Roman difficulty appears never to be settled; every now and then something new arises to stir it up afresh. So long as Rome has life and strength, the battles of the Reformation will have to be fought over and over again. If experience has taught us wisdom, we shall contest them in a different spirit.

Before entering upon a controversy we must take a sure standpoint, survey the field, and determine with precision the matter in dispute; otherwise there will inevitably be confusion and misunderstanding. If, then, we wish to refute what is commonly called Romanism, we must first clearly and

distinctly state in what Romanism consists, for mistakes have been made by controversialists in answering this question.

Romanism does not consist in those truths which it professes in common with other Christians, and which are the spiritual food of its members. The Romanist often points to these truths as his religion, when his Church is assailed; but that is not what we attack and call Romanism.

Nor does it consist in those errors which it holds in common with other Churches, such as the real and objective presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the mass, the seven sacraments, and sacramental grace *ex opere operato*, auricular confession and priestly absolution, & high symbolical liturgy in an unknown tongue, celibacy of the clergy, prayers to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, pilgrimages and prayers for the dead. All these errors, besides others, are as tenaciously and steadfastly held by the Eastern Churches, comprising many millions of adherents; and some of these false doctrines and superstitious practices are professed, in a modified form, by Protestant Churches. They are, therefore, not distinctively Roman. You may as well call the mass, confession, priestly absolution, and other doctrines, Russian, or Greek, or Armenian, or Syrian, &c., as Roman. Most of these errors existed in the Church before Romanism had being; and they had crept in, not purposively, but through an excess of piety and reverence for holy things and ordinances, or through the characteristic tendency of Eastern nations towards the symbolic or outward elements of religion.

When, therefore, we accuse our Ritualists, Sacramentarians, or others, of Romanism or Romeward tendencies, we utter a false accusation; for these errors are neither exclusively and distinctively Romish, nor do they of themselves lead to Rome. They must be dealt with by themselves, and on ~~their~~ own

merits, and not on the ground that they have any essential and distinctive connection with Romanism. This connection is altogether accidental. True, some of these Ritualists and men of similar tastes and tendencies, have gone over to Rome; but if ritualism alone induced them to take that step, their eyes must have been opened in astonishment when they found themselves actually within the portals of Rome, and discovered in what Romanism really consists. There they had to unlearn not only much of their former ritualism, but were compelled to learn what, before joining themselves to Rome, they so stoutly repudiated, namely, *yielding obedience to constituted rule and authority*, and that not intelligently, but blindly. No; ritualism is not essentially Romanism. True, Rome has a ritual which is the work of ages; but that does not constitute her essential and distinctive character. Other Churches have similar or even more gorgeous ones, in comparison with which the Roman ritual appears very sober and jejune.

What, then, is Romanism, since these errors do not of themselves constitute its special character? I answer: that is Romanism which no other Church but Rome holds, which pervades her whole constitution and nature, and by which she can be known and distinguished all over the world as the Church of Rome. And what is this? The doctrine, *that the Church of Christ is infallible; that the Church of Rome is the Church of Christ; and therefore that she alone is infallible.* This, stated in syllogistic form, is Romanism.

Simple as the dogma appears, it expresses Rome's distinguishing characteristic. It pervades and permeates her whole nature, and is the mainspring of her entire action. It imparts a peculiar tinge to all her errors, even those which she holds in common with other Churches; because she stereotypes

them and seals them with permanency. It is the source of new errors which are developed from time to time. It renders all doctrinal reform within her borders simply impossible; for, by reforming, she would deny her infallibility, and stultify herself. It gives the hierarchy that absolute sway over the consciences of her members which destroys all individuality, and nips in the bud all independence of inquiry. It causes her to consider herself the only Church of Christ, out of whose pale there is no salvation, and to regard all who differ from her as heretics and schismatics, against whom she fulminates her excommunications and anathemas. This doctrine of infallibility imbues her with the spirit of intolerance, persecution, and cruelty, and destroys in her heart that tender love which the good shepherd should feel towards errant sheep. It subordinates the Book of God to her voice; nay, she maintains that we should not have the Bible but for her and through her, nor understand it rightly but by means of her interpretation; for she claims an existence anterior to the Bible, and independent of it, and that she could exist even without it. In a word, this doctrine of infallibility gives life to her whole being, and colour to all her decrees, doctrines, and practices, so that even those truths or errors, doctrines and practices, which she holds in common with other Churches assume a different aspect when they are presented to her members as dogmas of faith. The infallibility of the Church is the final evidence of all, the supreme judge of controversies, the last sure resting-place for every doubting mind; hence so long as a member maintains this doctrine, he must perforce submit understanding and will to the decisions of the Church, stifling his doubts, however strong they may be. The Church must be right because it is infallible, and he wrong because fallible and erring. He

cannot conscientiously leave his Church until he is fully satisfied that her claim to infallibility is without foundation. The man who is thoroughly convinced of the falsehood of some of her doctrines, and is unwilling to submit his understanding to her, and at the same time is desirous to remain within her bosom, in order to agitate from within for reform, is truly to be pitied. Such an agitation would be visited with severe penalties, even with excommunication ; for reform involves the denial of her claim to infallibility. Rome is always *the same* : she retains what she once has got in possession, but she may unravel and develop more, for infallibility does not exclude the idea of development.

Has she not fully developed and in our days solemnly pronounced, among other things, the infallibility of the pope ? This dogma was decreed by the Bishops in the Vatican Council, and must, therefore, be believed by all Roman Catholics. It might be thought that this would convulse the entire Church and change her polity. By no means : the dogma of the infallibility of the pope is a legitimate outcome from the dogma of Church-infallibility ; it has been *practically* acted upon by the Roman curia for a number of centuries, and the Church has acquiesced, as a matter of course, in this action of the papal see. Papal infallibility and Church infallibility are intimately interwoven ; on admitting the latter, the former must be conceded.

Before the Vatican definition, all Roman Catholics were agreed that the head of the Church and the body together are infallible ; but the question was discussed for a long period whether this infallibility resides primarily and principally in the head or in the body. This question distinguished their divines into two schools, bitterly opposed to each other —the one maintaining that the gift of infallibility resides

primarily in the pope, who communicates it to the Church ; the other teaching that it is essentially possessed by the Church, and that the pope, as head of the Church, participates in it by agreeing with her. At length, this warmly debated question came to a crisis, and we have seen that in the Vatican council (1870) the papal party gained the day. If the Church is infallible, it is but reasonable that this prerogative should be vested in its head. Theoretically, this dogma does not change the complexion of Romanism ; for the pope, in issuing infallible decrees, does not claim to stand isolated and in his individual capacity. He is supposed to speak as the head, united with the body, to think and feel with the body, and after having ascertained its *consensus*, to speak finally as the mouthpiece of the body *ex cathedrâ*—in his official capacity. Pope and Church are still believed to participate mutually and unitedly in the gift of infallibility, as before the Vatican decree.

Such is the way in which Roman Catholics look upon papal infallibility. With them the Vatican decree effected nothing more than a removal of a cause of bitter division between two leading schools of theology, and a healing of old sores that embittered them each against the other. We shall see, in this course of lectures, whether they are right in their views on papal infallibility.

From what I have said it is evident that the very essence of Romanism consists in the belief in Church infallibility, and that by refuting this doctrine we demolish the very bulwark of the Church of Rome. To consider this subject in its principal bearings is the object of the following lectures. In order to render them as useful as possible, I shall endeavour, whilst I refute errors, *to establish in their place, the true and solid foundation of our faith.*

## LECTURE II.

### *THE LIVING VOICE OF THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE.*

THE all-pervading element of Roman Catholicism is the doctrine of Church-infallibility. It is this dogma which, in the eye of the Roman Catholic, invests his Church with Divine authority, and endears her to his heart. Whilst with a vast number of Protestants the word Church has no fixed and precise meaning, and with others the idea of a Church has almost disappeared so that no traces of organic Church-life are perceptible; to the member of the Church of Rome it possesses a real and all-important significance; to his mind it presents a very clear and well-defined idea, and to his spiritual life it is a living organism. He is a Church-man, in the strictest sense of the word.

Nor must we think that he has no weighty arguments for these determined views and for the strong attachment he bears to his Church. Indeed, so powerful and convincing does he consider the proofs in favour of Church infallibility that, whilst at times doubting the truth of other tenets of his Church, he finds no reason to doubt her infallibility; hence the great difficulty in convincing him of his errors. A Protestant would find it a difficult task to understand the mind of a learned and well-meaning Roman Catholic, to feel with him, and lead him out of his narrow system into something nobler and better. To clear the way for this task, let us first make some elementary remarks and definitions.

First, let us come to a clear understanding of the word Church. We believe that it is a society "built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone," having a continuous existence from apostolic times to our own, and possessing an organic vitality, by virtue of which its members profess the same faith, partake of the same sacraments, are united by communion of charity, animated by the same hope, and governed in the manner indicated by Christ and His Apostles.

Now, although Roman Catholics may not object to the substance of this definition, still they vastly differ from us when they explain it in detail. Thus the form of government pointed out in the New Testament is according to their theory a visible spiritual monarchy, with the pope at its head; union in charity means union with, and subjection to the bishop of Rome; instead of two, they admit seven sacraments and give them a value and efficacy we cannot concede; their views of apostolic succession differ considerably from our doctrine of a continuous and uninterrupted existence from the apostles to our days.

These differences may be in some degree understood when we reflect that Roman Catholics give a preponderating influence to the outward or visible element of the Church. We, like them, admit two elements in the constitution of the Church, namely, the invisible or inward, and the visible or outward part. None will deny that every living society has these two constituents. The invisible element of the Church is the Word of God—not the letter but the spirit—the grace of God, the Holy Ghost pervading the whole body of the Church, breathing where He listeth, enlightening the mind, changing the heart, strengthening and comforting the whole man. The visible or outward element comprises all

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that can be perceived by our senses, such as the members of the Church, preaching, rites, ceremonies, &c.

There exists, no doubt, a mutual and reciprocal influence between these two elements which tends to propagate and perpetuate the Church. Whilst we exclude neither of them, we must be careful to give to each its proper place. It is evident that the inner element ought to have the preponderance over the external one, the Spirit over the senses, the Word of God over the word of man.

It appears not to be thus in the Roman Catholic system, where the external and visible element manifestly prevails. The adherent of Rome considers Christianity chiefly as something outward. This is manifest in all his religious practices. The worship through the senses prevails over the intellectual and spiritual worship. His religion is sacramental; outward signs and rites are with him the effectual means and instruments to which God's grace is promised and without which it is impossible to obtain it. Evidently, this natural tendency of man for the outward and tangible has, perhaps unconsciously, been the reason why the living voice of the Church has been invested with infallibility.

We agree with the Roman Catholic that the Church is infallible, but we differ from him as to the seat of that infallibility. We maintain that it resides in the inner element of the Church, namely, in the Word of God contained in the Bible and deposited within the Church. We believe that the Bible is the infallible element of the Church, and that on this account only, and on no other, she is said to be infallible, "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*" We contend that a member of the Church can, as far as is necessary for his salvation, obtain the truth, with sufficient certainty, by applying to the Bible the infallible element of the Church.

The Roman Catholic, on the contrary, affirms that the gift of infallibility resides primarily in the outward element, namely, the living voice of the Church, so that if any one wishes to know the truth, he must apply to the Church. But he maintains that the truth she proclaims is *not new*, but contained in a two-fold depository—the Bible and tradition, which are entrusted to her keeping and guardianship. He believes that both the Bible and tradition are a dead and unintelligible letter if we separate them from the living voice of the Church. He maintains that it is only through the Church that we possess them and are enabled to understand them; nay, some of their divines go so far as to assert that the Church could live and flourish without the Bible.

In this connection, we must bear in mind that by the term Church they do not understand the whole body of its members, but only the *teaching* portion; and of these we must again exclude the priesthood and inferior clergy as not participating in the gift of infallibility. Only the bishops, with the pope at their head, as strictly successors of the Apostles, are held to be endowed with the power of issuing infallible decrees and definitions binding upon all the members, and they, therefore, constitute the infallible Church. Here, again, we remark that they are believed to enjoy this prerogative, *not individually*, but *collectively*. It must be ascertained whether the whole episcopate speaks, or only a portion of it; and this infallible teaching body of the Church may utter infallible dogmas, either assembled in a general council, or dispersed throughout the world.

Again, in order to avoid all misconception in the discussion of this controversy, we must see what limits they set to this infallibility. They say, it is *not an inspiration*; they allow that the Bible alone is inspired; they look upon it as

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an assistance of the Holy Spirit promised and given by Christ to lead the Apostles and their successors into all truth. They allow that this assistance does not exclude, but rather presupposes, all the appliances of human enquiry and study. Before the episcopate establishes a doctrine as a dogma of faith, it is required to look deeply into the deposit of faith, consult Scripture and tradition, and if, after long and mature enquiry into these sources, it finds that the dogma has been held *semper, ubique et ab omnibus*—always, everywhere and by all—it is justified in declaring that it is a Catholic doctrine, and must be held and believed by all members of the Church, under pain of excommunication. This enquiry they believe so to be assisted by the Holy Ghost, that the result of it is infallible truth.

Roman Catholic theologians usually divide their treatise on Church-infallibility into two parts. The first part is general; in its course, they endeavour to prove *a priori*, i. e. without considering their own Church, that the Church of Christ is endowed with the gift of infallibility. The second division is particular, and applies the principle established in the first part to their own Church, thus proving that, of all Churches calling themselves Christians, the Church of Rome alone can lay claim to infallibility, and is therefore the only Church of Christ deserving the confidence of man. We shall follow this division, and prove, first, that the Church of Christ is not infallible, in the Roman Catholic sense; and secondly, that the Church of Rome, instead of being infallible, has greatly deviated from the path of truth, and that because of this very doctrine of Church-infallibility.

At the very outset of our discussion, we ask our Roman Catholic brethren whether the doctrine of Church-infallibility meets the object for which they so ardently contend, namely,

the attainment of an infallible faith based altogether on divine authority. Surely, they will agree with us that it is not self-evident ; they will certainly not pretend that the mark of infallibility is so clearly stamped on the episcopate as to elicit at once the faith of man, however ready he may be to grasp at any evidence that promises to lead him to the attainment of truth. This doctrine, then, requires to be demonstrated by such proofs and arguments as will convince the mind beyond the possibility of doubt. But these arguments are only the work of the human mind, which is liable to error and mistake, and, whilst they may convince some, will be rejected by others. Roman Catholics profess to believe in the revealed truths of God, on the infallible authority of the Church ; and they believe in the latter because they are convinced of it by the arguments of fallible human reason. Who does not see that such a method of procedure cannot imbue the mind with infallible divine faith ? Whilst they profess a belief in the infallible Church, they really believe in the correctness of the arguments by which they establish that infallibility, and no ~~more~~ more.

It appears to me that the rule of faith should suppose nothing prior on which it depends for its certainty ; and if that something prior is human reason, what else can I call it but rationalism ? And however strongly Roman Catholics may repudiate this imputation, however vehemently they may claim that their Church is the bulwark of faith against rationalism ; still if we consider the basis of their rule of faith and the vast amount of philosophy that enters into the defence of their distinctive dogmas, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that the whole Roman system is tainted with rationalism.

But they retort against us that we, too, must suppose a

certain amount of reasoning before we can admit the Bible as the infallible element of the Church. We answer that our position is entirely different from theirs. We base the authority of the Bible on no human arguments, as they establish the doctrine of infallibility ; but we take it on its own merits. Without any argumentation, we find that the Bible is the great book, the only book of an *historical* and *providential* importance, admirable in its origin and relation to all mankind. It excites, therefore, our attention, and stimulates in us an almost irresistible interest. We find, without any logical process, that it is and always has been the book of the Church, and that whatever truth and life there is in the Church has been drawn from its pages. We open it, read it attentively and with a prayerful disposition, and we find that all the praises we have heard of this wonderful book are fully justified. As we read on, the truth contained in it strikes our mind, touches our conscience, impresses deeply our whole being. I cannot enter here into details, but this much I unhesitatingly say, that the book has in itself the internal evidence of truth, and bears witness of its divine origin. There may be obscure passages, and surely there are, but who can all at once understand the wonderful works of God ? The more we read it with a fitting disposition of mind and heart, the more we understand of it ; and that which we understand we cannot help but acknowledge to be divine truth ; by virtue of this we are compelled to believe that those parts which we do not as yet understand are also Divine. We need no external proofs, however profound and learned, to establish the authority of this book. We simply say, Come and see ; here is a book that bears unmistakable evidence on its face of being the truth of God ; and if you read it guided by

the Spirit of God, you will see as we see, and be fully satisfied. Thus our faith is not rationalism in disguise, but is based on a *fact*—a fact of which God Himself is the author—a divine fact; hence we confidently lay claim to a faith bright with evidence.

It is, therefore, obvious that the manner in which we establish our rule of faith is altogether different from that in which Roman Catholics establish theirs. With us, he who wishes to overthrow the Church of Christ, must first overthrow the Bible; but with the Roman Catholic, the demolition of the arguments by which infallibility is established is sufficient to overturn and destroy the whole edifice of the Church.

The Roman Catholic will reply that he fails to see how the arguments by which he establishes the infallibility of the Church can taint his system with rationalism. He may allow that such would be the case if they were drawn from pure reason and independent of facts; but he claims that the arguments in favour of infallibility derive their force from the very nature of the Christian verities. To us this does not appear to alter the case; for a rule of faith must be a self-evident fact, and in no way dependent on human reasoning for its credibility. However we shall see what value his arguments possess.

The first argument by which Roman Catholics seek to demolish our position on the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith, and imagine they establish the infallibility of the Church, is the existence of the Church prior to the Bible. They maintain that the Church was fully established and existed for a considerable time before the Bible was completed. If then there was from the first an infallible element in the Church, the Bible could not be that element, since

no other infallible rule then existed than the *living voice* of the Church ; and if the Church was infallible in pre-biblical times, why not afterwards ?

We answer that this prior existence of the Church before the Bible is only apparent. In reality, the Bible existed before the Church. All will agree that the Scriptures of the Old Testament existed before the Church ; nay, Christ and His Apostles built their divine mission on them by constant appeals to them. Moreover none will deny that the Gospel is contained in the Old Testament, and that the constitution of the Church is clearly foreshadowed therein. The Christian Church, therefore, depended greatly as to her rule of faith on the Old Testament Scriptures, especially as the first Christians were mostly converts from Judaism who needed constant reference to their sacred writings as a rule of faith. Further, as the Church of Christ was to be "built on the foundation of the Apostles, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone," she cannot be said to have fully existed before their death. The building of the Church on this foundation and the writing of the New Testament Scriptures commenced and proceeded concurrently until both were completed by the same workmen, so that at their death the Church stood forth with a complete constitution, and a rule of faith given by God's Spirit to lead men into all truth, "even to the end of the world." We are justified, therefore, in concluding that the Bible existed prior to the Church.

But should this process of reasoning not fully satisfy our Roman Catholic brethren, let them reflect that the state of the Church during the lifetime of the Apostles differed materially from her condition in post-Apostolical times ; for the Apostles were individually inspired, or they would not have been qualified for their office as founders of the Church.

They were inspired, or the promises of Christ to them would have failed of accomplishment; they were inspired, or they could not have given so many miraculous proofs of the special presence of the Holy Ghost; nor would they, in their writings, have either directly or indirectly so repeatedly laid claim to inspiration. We shall not enter here into the nature of this inspiration; we simply maintain that the inspired founders of the Church, by virtue of their office, were a rule of faith; but when they departed this life, their *writings* were looked upon as the apostolical foundation on which the Church was built. And what better substitute could we have for the living voice of the Apostles than their inspired writings?

But here Roman Catholics step forward, and endeavour to prove that the infallibility of the Apostles did not die with them, but is shared by their successors, not indeed individually and personally, but in their official and collective capacity. Let us consider this argument which contains many interesting points in our next lecture.

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## LECTURE III.

### *CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRIPTURE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF INFALLIBILITY.*

**R**OMAN Catholics maintain that the gift of infallibility which the Apostles possessed did not become extinct in the Church after their death, but was continued in their successors, the bishops, inasmuch as they constitute the teaching body.

We might ask here, if the bishops, by virtue of their Apostolic succession, are infallible, why do they possess this prerogative, not individually, but only as a body? What justifies them in making this distinction? Are not the priests also, according to their theory, successors of the Apostles? Why then are they not infallible? Do not both laity and clergy together constitute the Church? Why confine the infallible authority of the Church to a mere fraction? Why this arbitrary system of *minimizing* which is so characteristic of the Church of Rome, not only here but also in other matters? We have no time now to enter upon these questions; let Roman Catholics answer them if they can. We content ourselves with demolishing the foundation of this minimizing system of infallibility.

We believe that the Apostles, as such, had no successors. As Apostles they were the founders and organizers of the Church, and who does not see that, as a matter of course, such an office expired at their death? True, they appointed

bishops, priests, and deacons, but these were wedded, as it were, only to *local* Churches, and their office and authority were far different from those of the Apostles; nor do we anywhere read that they ever laid claim to Apostolical prerogatives. If, then, the Apostles, as such, had no successors, and if they enjoyed the gift of infallibility only as Apostles, what foundation has the episcopate for claiming infallibility as full successors of the Apostles?

Let them not say that the gift of infallibility resides in the whole Church, but that the bishops alone practically exercise it, because, by virtue of their office, they are the *representatives* of the Church. Where in the Bible do they find this theory? It is in the nature of representation that representatives should be chosen by the parties whom they represent. Who appoints the bishops? Their dioceses? No; the people have no part whatever in the election. They are altogether the creatures of the pope, who, in appointing them, has no regard whatever to the voice of the people; they are bishops *by favour of the Apostolic See*. How then can they be said to be representatives of the people, and as such enjoy the gift of infallibility?

But granting, for argument's sake, that the bishops are the successors of the Apostles; we cannot see by what reasoning Roman Catholics can establish the infallibility of the episcopate. They claim to prove it from the Scriptures; but they teach also that we cannot know the existence of Scripture as such, nor believe in its divine inspiration until we are taught and assured of it by the Church. They prove the infallibility of the Church by the Bible, and the canon and inspiration of the Bible by the infallible teaching of the Church. Is not this proving the same by the same, or what logicians call a *circulus vitiosus*?

They answer, No; for when we prove the infallibility of the Church by the Bible we consider the latter merely as a book of the highest human authority, a book of the greatest credibility; and after having proved by its testimony the infallibility of the Church, we prove by the teaching of the Church that this book is more than human—that it is the inspired Word of God. Thus we do not prove the same by the same, for we consider the Bible under two aspects, first as merely human, and then as a divine book.

Behold, what a formidable apparatus of human ratiocination this doctrine of infallibility requires! First, by all the rules of criticism, and by a long series of human argumentation they must prove that every single book in the canon of the Scriptures is genuine, authentic, and true; and after having done so, they have advanced only one step; they have proved only that the Bible is a book of human authority. The next step is to prove, by a similar apparatus of learning, that this book teaches the infallibility of the Church. After having gone through all this course of reasoning, have they absolute certainty as to the truth of all their premises, the correctness and concatenation of their inferences? And who does not see that only men of talent and learning are able to undertake this formidable labour, and successfully to complete it? What are the rest of their members to do? Since infallibility is not self-evident, where will they find reasons "for the hope that is in them"? Must they believe the Church infallible because some of their learned divines tell them that, after a long course of theological labour, they can prove it from a book of the highest human authority? Does it not thus appear that faith in the infallibility of the Church, both of the learned and the ignorant, rests only on human authority? And does not this reciprocal proving, first

from the Bible as a human book that the Church is infallible, and then by the voice of the Church that this same human book is inspired, seem too much like paying a debt of gratitude to this book, by conferring upon it the title of inspired, because it has done service to the Church? Such a process is calculated to destroy all faith both in the Bible and the Church.

If the Bible is inspired, that inspiration must be its all-pervading element; it must be the stamp impressed upon it by its Divine Author, so that every soul thirsting after truth may readily perceive it and be satisfied. If an extraneous authority, and that, too, an authority having not a self-evident and palpable, but only a demonstrable claim to infallibility, gives the Bible its certificate of inspiration, there is every reason for looking upon it with suspicion. Hence the Church of Rome, by thus dealing with the rule of faith, appears to me to lead us into a labyrinth of doubt and uncertainty.

Let us suppose, now, the Roman Catholic has proved the authenticity, genuineness and truth of the Bible as a human composition, how does he prove from it that the episcopate, as the successors of the Apostles, are endowed with infallibility?

He endeavours to prove it, first, from all those texts containing the promises of Christ to the Apostles and the Church, securing their infallibility and consequent authority. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii, 20.) "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi, 18.) "Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be en-

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dued with power from on high." (Luke xxiv, 47-49.) "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John xvi, 13.) From these and similar promises, it is contended that Christ promised to be with His Church to the end of the world; he promised her the Holy Ghost to be with her and lead her into all truth; that the Holy Spirit descended visibly upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and that he was with them in their first council at Jerusalem, and guided them to infallible decrees.

We answer that, although these and similar texts prove that the Apostles were especially assisted by the Holy Ghost, as founders of the Church, none of them promises infallibility either to the whole body of the Church, or to the episcopate alone. We grant that the Holy Ghost was to be with the Church, as well as with the Apostles, until the end of the world; but we maintain that we must also admit a difference in the *manner* in which he assists either. Surely, no one will pretend that He was to be manifested in the same form and measure to the Apostles and to the Church, after their death.

How are we to settle this point, since Scripture appears to be silent about it! We think, the nature of the Apostolic office and mission and that of the Church after their death gives us a clear and definite answer to the question. He was with the Apostles in their official capacity as *witnesses* in order to give an *infallible* testimony of what Christ had taught and done for us. We think it a significant fact that there were only twelve apostles and that they were specially chosen by Christ, in order that none might arrogate to himself the same privileges which they, as the chosen twelve, possessed. St. Paul was a particular vessel of election; he was a witness of the revelation he had especially re-

ceived ; but we find that none whom the Apostles ordained claimed or enjoyed the same privileges. To the apostles the truth was delivered by Christ and the Holy Spirit ; they were the *original receivers* ; they planted the faith by teaching what was necessary to be believed ; and they established the Church. And like the inspired prophets of old, they were moved not only to teach by word of mouth, but also to deposit the saving truth in written records, for the sure guidance and salvation of future generations. The Holy Ghost was with them both as *witnesses* and as *writers*, in order to establish the truths of Christianity in the world. Certainly we all agree that the Church was to be built on an infallible foundation, and that therefore the apostles as such were alone endowed with the gift of infallibility.

But we see also clearly that, when the Church of Christ was once founded by the apostles, and when the needful amount of revealed truth was once infallibly recorded in a book, no infallible authority was necessary for the teaching body of the Church, since its functions differed widely from those of the apostles. The *certainty* that its dogmatic system is contained in, and conformable with the Bible is sufficient for the guidance of men ; and this certainty may safely be attained by comparing both together. Moreover we believe that the Holy Ghost assists the sincere enquirer in securing this certainty.

All will concur with us that there is a great difference between *certainty* and *infallibility*. He that is infallible *cannot* err ; he who is certain can err, but *does not* err ; he has evidence that he does not err on such or such a point, and therefore he is certain. Now we have in the Bible the *infallible* deposit of truth, for it is the unerring Word of God ; but we have *certainty* in our mind when we acquire the truth

from the Bible.. We *may* err, but we have reason to believe that we *do not* err. The Apostles required infallibility in writing the Bible, but we do not need that gift in reading and preaching the truths therein contained ; certainty is all that we want. We are enabled to acquire this certainty so far as it is necessary for our welfare ; what more can we desire ? True, we ought to be constantly on our guard, for, as human beings, our intellect is limited and we are liable to error ; but God's Spirit assists us in our earnest enquiries, and when we are certain of having attained to the truth from the infallible Word, let us be content and give thanks to the Spirit who vouchsafed to enlighten us. If Roman Catholics had, as reasonable men, been satisfied with this certainty, and not aimed too high by endeavouring to give the human mind an infallible knowledge of the truth, they would never have dreamed of endowing the living voice of the Church with infallibility, thereby involving themselves in the intricacies of a system that oppresses them like an incubus and places all reforms within the Church beyond the reach of possibility.

If we gave to the writings of the Apostles no *providential significance* as the depository of divine truth for all ages ; if we looked upon them as mere occasional appendages which the Church could do well without ; if we considered them dependent as regards belief in their inspiration, and also their true interpretation, on the authority of the post-apostolic Church ; we might, probably, feel perplexed and allow that Roman Catholics appear to be right in claiming continuous infallibility for the living voice of the Church. But these suppositions have not a shadow of truth in their favour. Do not the sacred writers themselves tell us that they write not with any transient object, but for the high purpose that we may obtain the truth, believe in the truth, and be saved by

it? Does St. John consider the Scriptures as mere temporary adjuncts, or as passing phenomena in the life of the Church, when he says, "These things were written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing ye might have life through His name." (John xx, 31.) Or does St. Paul think little of the Bible when he writes, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (ii. Tim. iii. 16-17.) While one sacred writer constantly refers us to the writings of another, not one of them ever intimates to us either the necessity or the existence of any other rule of faith. It is an historical fact that the teachings of the Apostles, as recorded in Holy Scripture, were considered not only during their life-time, but immediately after their death, as the only depository of divine revelation. If it were otherwise, why should they have been read in the Christian assemblies as an essential part of their religious services, even during the life-time of the Apostles? Why that eagerness to collect them immediately into one book? "Considering the poverty of the early Christians, the persecutions to which they were subject, the imperfect means of multiplying copies of Scripture at their disposal, the comparative infrequency of inter-communication in those days, the Apostolic writings were disseminated with a rapidity and acknowledged with a universality of consent truly wonderful." (Hodge's Outlines of Theol., p. 98).

And does not this plainly show that they were more than mere accidental appendages of the Church, and rather held a providential place in God's spiritual government? If we read the writings of the early fathers of the Church, especi-

ally those who lived in the Apostolic age, we find that they looked upon the Scriptures of the New Testament as the inspired Word of God, and quoted copiously from their pages. However carefully we may examine these patristic writings, we cannot find any organized body of Churchmen, in those early times, claiming the gift of infallibility. On the contrary, all controversies of faith were settled by appealing to the Scriptures and the teaching of the Apostles as contained in their writings. Although owing to the different schools, of philosophy, from which converts were made to Christianity religious controversies, in those early times, were more numerous and subtle than in our own days; yet the simple appeal to Scripture was considered sufficient to settle them. In the interpretation of Scripture, sound common sense, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, was employed; and as this is universal, and eccentricity the exception, appeal was sometimes made to the catholic or universal belief of Christians, not because this universal consent was considered the infallible depository of faith, but as an external and additional argument against the heretics of the time. This appeal however was not intended to prove the doctrines in question, but only to confirm the proofs taken from Scripture. What we have here briefly stated, in these paragraphs, as undoubted facts, may be easily verified by any impartial enquirer who will take the trouble of reading the works of the early Christian writers, or of consulting the productions of our learned divines, where ample quotations from the Fathers are given in proof of these statements.

From what we have said it may be safely concluded that Christ and the Holy Ghost were present in a different manner with the Apostles to that they were or are with the post-Apostolic Church. With the Apostles they were present in their

teachings and writings in order to infallibly establish the Church on a sure foundation and to give us the deposit of faith for all ages. This required infallibility. With the post-Apostolic Church the Spirit is present in order to preserve and guard the Bible, and preach the doctrines therein contained. This does not require infallibility, the former being the continual acknowledgment of an historical fact established by the Apostles and the latter a *vivā-voce* repetition and explanation of doctrines contained in the sacred records. The office of the Church, since the death of the apostles, has been to use all her endeavors to have the Scriptures preserved, propagated, preached, read both at public worship and in private, meditated upon and practised. Thus the Word of God is the infallible, the only infallible element of the Church, and the Holy Ghost pervading the Church certainly establishes His kingdom in the hearts of believers.

A certain degree of authority, far different from infallibility, was claimed by the episcopate of the first ages of Christianity. They took their arguments, in refuting heretics and schismatics, from the written Word of God, not from their own authority—their own *ipse dixit*. It was only when the episcopate obtained high *political* influence that it lost the primitive Apostolic spirit, becoming haughty and despotic, and arrogating to itself the attribute of infallibility, an attribute which only the greatest spiritual despotism has ventured to assert. This despotism of a pretended infallibility commenced with the dawn of the Church's political influence, under the emperor Constantine; extended itself gradually over a wider field of jurisdiction; was at its height in the middle ages, when it possessed the full power of crushing in the bud any attempt to resist its usurped authority; became at last an intolerable scourge of mankind,

until God took pity on Christendom and by the Reformation struck the first heavy blow at its unwarrantable assumptions. Since then it has lost a great deal of its external rigour and splendour; and yet in spirit it exists the same as before. We think that the history of this spiritual absolutism claiming infallibility bears sufficient evidence that Christ did not wish his Church to be deemed infallible, in the sense of Roman Catholicism. Could Christ be with His Church, could He send the Holy Spirit for the purpose of creating such a spiritual despotism as the pages of history reveal to us? Impossible.

But Roman Catholics insist that the promises of Christ to the Apostles must have a different meaning from that which we give them, because the Church as a living society instituted by Christ is a *witness* of Christ and His doctrine, by her constant profession and teaching, so that, as the Apostles were the immediate witnesses, each generation of the Church is also a witness of the teaching of the one immediately preceding it. They argue that such is the nature of the witness-bearing of a living society, that, while one generation is in full vigour, the preceding one still lives (though gradually departing out of existence) to correct any erroneous teaching of its actual successor; whilst the next generation is in its youth and may be carefully taught by its predecessor. Thus three generations always exist partially together, and may aid and correct each other in their testimony. This is the only way in which the Church, as a living society, bears uninterrupted testimony to the Apostolical teaching. Who does not see that both the writings and the oral teachings of the Apostles come within the scope of her witness-bearing? You cannot know what the Apostles taught, nor can you even believe in the Bible as the Word of God except on the

testimony of the Church. This uninterrupted testimony of the Church, in her capacity as witness, may in a comprehensive sense, be called *tradition*. The Bible itself is a part of this tradition-system; it has been handed down, together with the other portions of the teachings of Christ, by the Church as a living witness of God's revealed truths. If then, they conclude, the promises of Christ are to have their accomplishment, if there must consequently be an infallible element within the Church, we cannot but admit that the Church must be itself infallible.

Let us examine this argument in our next Lecture.

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## LECTURE IV.

### *REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE CHURCH'S OFFICE AS WITNESS-BEARER — TRADI- TION.*

WE concluded our last lecture with the argument of the Roman Catholics that the Church must be infallible on account of her office as witness. They endeavour to strengthen their position by arguing in the following manner: No doubt, we agree with you that the principal mission of the apostles was to be "witnesses of all things which Christ did" (Acts x., 39), and that "they were witnesses chosen before God" (Acts x., 41); but we dissent from you in regard to the perpetuity of this office of witness-bearing. We maintain that all those offices and gifts of which Christ, in conferring them, expressly declared that they should continue "unto the end of the world" and reach "all nations," did not die out with the apostles, but became the heritage of the Church. Now, that this witness-bearing of the apostles is one of these offices can be easily proved from different texts of Scripture; for Christ says, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness unto all nations*" (Matt. xxiv., 14); and again, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i., 8); and in another place, "Go ye, therefore, and teach *all nations*; and lo I am with you

*awav, even unto the end of the world."* (Matt. xxviii., 19-20.) Now if we reflect that the office of witness is given in connection with the promise of the Spirit's assistance, we must conclude that the Church, too, in her witness-bearing capacity enjoys the same divine aid, and is consequently infallible.

We answer that, whilst we agree with the Roman Catholics that the Church is a witness, we dissent from them as to the manner in which she performs this function. Of course, as a living society she cannot but bear witness of the life and doctrine of her Founder; at the same time we contend that this witness-bearing consists in preserving and keeping the Book written by the inspired prophets and apostles on whom she is built, and in preaching the doctrines therein contained. For this purpose she need not be endowed with an infallible mouth; certainty is all that is required, and this she may obtain by using an adequate amount of application and care. Nor do we consider this witness-bearing of the Church absolutely necessary to assure us that the Bible is inspired, for as a rule of faith the Book must be altogether independent of anything anterior; we must take it on its own merits, or we cannot possibly have a rule of faith at all.

Whilst we highly respect the testimony of the Church, Roman Catholics, here as elsewhere, go beyond the limits of due deference, by endowing that testimony with infallibility. We tell them that, instead of making matters of faith clearer and easier, by this adventitious aid, they necessarily involve themselves in a maze of perplexity; for the testimony of a continuous and ever-living society differs essentially from that of an individual; and therefore we must pay attention to the past as well as to the present.

Roman Catholics teach that, in regard to the present, the living voice of the episcopate is the infallible witness of

Christ's doctrine, and that, with reference to the past, *oral tradition* occupies the place of the same infallible testimony of the Church ; for what else is oral tradition but the teaching of different generations of the Church so closely and uninterruptedly linked together in their life and belief that, by word of mouth, one generation or traditional line hands down the teaching of Christ and his Apostles to the next one, and so on, to our own day ? Even the Bible is but the written portion of this tradition-system.

Thus, by the very nature of their system, they are compelled to defend the infallibility of tradition, as a part of the infallibility-doctrine of their Church ; and this they do with characteristic zeal. But who fails to perceive that this must involve their whole system in a labyrinth of difficulties ?

However ingeniously and subtly Roman Catholic divines may philosophize about the certainty of oral tradition, we maintain that their arguments are singularly inconclusive. There are very few cases in which oral tradition communicates the knowledge of facts and truths even with a slight degree of probability. We give little credence to those parts of the history of nations which are handed down to us by this channel of communication, and for the most part regard them as legendary tales and romantic visions. We find it difficult to acquire any accurate knowledge of a fact that happens in our own day and generation ; how utterly impossible, then, must it be for us to search through a long series of traditional lines and trace, with certainty, to their beginning facts that happened many centuries ago ? If the tradition be purely oral, we are absolutely without any guide to direct our researches. How can we possibly prove that certain facts occurred in bygone ages, without recourse to written documents ? Surely it is not enough to say that the

present generation believes them, having received them by oral tradition. Moreover the difficulty increases, when the objects of this oral communication are not merely simple events, but a whole system of religious doctrine transcending man's mental capacities and warring against his natural inclinations, and a whole body of liturgical ordinances and disciplinary observances,—the very things which would be most likely to be corrupted in the process of oral transmission from generation to generation.

This uncertainty of oral tradition has been felt from the very dawn of man's history. It is but natural to suppose that it would be the earliest method of transmitting from father to son the events of the past, and in those early ages when the human race was not large and men lived several hundred years, this channel may have been adequate and trustworthy for a considerable time. But experience soon taught them that they must have a surer way of handing down history to future generations. For this purpose, they invented hieroglyphics, commemorative observances and, finally, writing. We consider it a conclusive proof against oral tradition that with the invention of writing commences the authentic and reliable history of man. It is in the very nature of things that mere communications by word of mouth are soon forgotten or distorted, but that which is written remains—*litera scripta manet*. We believe that writing is a *providential gift* of God bestowed on man to perpetuate safely His revealed truths to the end of the world ; nay, it is a preliminary act in the divine dispensations. Like revelation itself, writing is an element in God's plan of educating mankind ; whilst oral tradition, instead of having an elevating tendency, keeps man where he is, and instead of imbuing his mind with certainty, would leave him a

prey to legendary tales and superstitious beliefs and observances.

But our Roman Catholic brethren answer that the tradition of Christ's Church is not merely oral, since it has also been written down. It is oral in its nature, but it has also been committed to writing as an external means of confirming us in our adherence to the infallible voice of the Church. They tell us that it is embalmed in creeds and liturgies, in the decrees and canons of general and particular councils, in the writings of the fathers and doctors of the Church.

If you ask them whether all these writings are the tradition of the Church, they answer: No; but only those portions which bear witness to what was believed as Catholic doctrine in those days. And if you ask them again, how you may find out what is testimony and what individual opinion in these writings, they will give you the following rule: *Quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus creditum est*—what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all, is Catholic doctrine. In other words: Read all these writings, and that in which they all agree is the *semper, ubique et ab omnibus creditum*—the common faith of the Church in all times and places.

Let us pause here. That, then, is oral tradition. Why, it is not oral tradition after all. Roman Catholics have to come to our way of thinking that the Word of God is given to us in written records. We were told by them that the Scriptures were obscure, insufficient, and so difficult of comprehension that they could never be an independent rule of faith for man, and we were promised an easier way of ascertaining divine truth. But what have we here? A rule that, on account of its vastness, must overwhelm any sincere enquirer after truth. In order to give an account of the hope that is in him, and to fully satisfy his mind that a doctrine

is catholic and contained within the depository of faith, called tradition, he must wade through a whole library of fathers and doctors of the Church, acts of councils, liturgies, &c., and that not in a desultory manner, but in a critical spirit, comparing work with work, until he finds the doctrines upon which all are agreed. And if we consider the great number of truths revealed by God, and if in regard to each of these this process must be repeated, we may well ask in astonishment, would it be possible for man, if such were the rule of faith, ever to acquire an intelligent conviction of the dogmas proposed for his belief? Would it be possible for any human being to undertake this huge task and complete it successfully?

To this difficulty they reply that the Church performs this task for every one of her members. How so? What is this Church but the bishops? Are they not individually fallible human beings? And must not this task be undertaken by them *individually* before they can give a decision *collectively*? They meet the difficulty by endowing the episcopate as a body with infallibility. But do they not also teach that this gift of infallibility is *not an inspiration*, but only *an assistance* of God's Spirit, and presupposes faithful enquiry into the whole field of tradition, so as to discover what has always, everywhere, and by all, been believed? And can they expect that, if this enquiry be neglected or carelessly conducted, the Spirit's assistance will be given them in their collective decree? Has it come to this that the members of the Church must resign themselves altogether into the hands of the bishops who may after all be incapable or careless enquirers after truth?

And now since the Vatican council they maintain that the pope alone can infallibly pronounce what doctrines are or are not to be found in this depository of tradition. But if,

according to their system, papal infallibility is not an inspiration, but an assistance in enquiry, the pope is bound to perform the almost superhuman work of examining critically the whole vast body of tradition, before he is justified in giving an infallible decree, *ex cathedra*. Can he perform this work for himself, amidst the many cares of his government, or do others do it for him? If so, how is he certain that his theologians have performed it properly? And is he justified in giving a decree without this certainty?

Here Roman Catholics have to solve another difficulty. Do they not prove the infallibility of their Church from tradition? But we have already seen that they prove the infallibility of tradition by the infallibility of the Church, and is this not reasoning in a circle—a fault unpardonable in logicians? They cannot say here, as they said in regard to the Scripture proof in favor of infallibility, that they consider tradition under a twofold aspect, and thus avoid contradiction; for they teach that oral tradition and the living voice of the Church are one and the same thing; to prove, therefore, the one by the other would be proving the same thing by the same.

Nor can they escape the difficulty by saying that the bishops, as *successors of the Apostles*, have received the *depositum* of faith from the great Head of the Church to be transmitted by them from generation to generation; and that, holding this authoritative commission, they have no need of disinterring the records of past ages to prove their infallibility. But, then, to prove their commission, they must prove their uninterrupted Apostolical succession, and for the proof of this succession they go to tradition. Can they, at the same time, be allowed to give their own evidence as to the authority of that tradition? This would be describing a circle,—a gross sophism.

Now, why should God make use of such an uncertain method of diffusing and preserving His precious revelation? Why should He use an instrument so much exposed to attack from enemies of the truth? Why should He ordain, in His all-wise providence, that some of His revealed truths should be written down, and for this end inspire the writers, and that another part should not be written at all but left to the chances of oral tradition? Why should we admit this want of uniformity in the most momentous affair of life? We see no reason for it; nay, we have reasons for the contrary supposition.

We find that Christ more than once inveighed against the Pharisees on account of their traditions (Matt. xv., 3-6; Mark vii., 9-13). He tells them that by their traditions they place burdens on men's shoulders which God did not wish them to place there. He rebukes them for adhering more to their traditions than to the Word of God. He reproaches them for obscuring the Scriptures by their traditions. He never refers to tradition except to condemn it. Is not this a proof that no part of God's revelation was handed down by tradition? Christ tells us what evil consequences had resulted from the regard which was paid by the Jews to tradition; and St. Peter speaks of their vain conversation as received by tradition, showing thereby that tradition handed them down nothing from God. Besides, has not tradition been the veil which has hindered them from understanding their own Scriptures, and recognizing in Christ the promised Messiah? But if God did not employ tradition under the Old Law why should we suppose that, without telling us of the alteration, He employs it in the New Dispensation? And if tradition has been productive of so many evils to Jews, why should we believe that it is of superior authority

now, and that it will not be productive of similar evils to Christians? And let us ask, whether among the warnings of the New Testament none are to be found against the traditions of men? Is there not this solemn warning, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men" (Col. ii., 8)? Christ himself, in His disputation with the Jews, never appealed to their traditions, but invariably to the Scriptures, giving us thereby to understand that, as in the Old Testament divine revelation was deposited in a book, so it should likewise be under the New Dispensation. He never appealed to the authority of the Sanhedrim, the supreme council of the Jewish priesthood, but to the Scriptures as the only rule of faith.

If we compare the Jewish system of tradition which our Saviour so strongly condemned with that of the Church of Rome, we find that they are strictly analogous. I cannot do better than give a *résumé* of this analogy extracted from the learned and erudite work of Dr. Peck,—“*Appeal from Tradition to Scripture and Common Sense:*”—

“Both Jews and Roman Catholics trace their traditions to God, the former through Moses, the latter through the Apostles. Both regard them as a supplement to and commentary upon the written Law, transmitted through a regular succession of divinely appointed ministers. In both systems, the traditions which had accumulated to an indefinite extent came finally to be written down by the doctors. Among the Jews, *Rabbi Judah*, called *Hakkadosh*, collected what were considered the genuine traditions into one book called the *Mishna*, which forthwith obtained great authority. The oral traditions of the Christian Church, first reduced to writing we are told by the the Roman Catholics, are the creeds, the liturgies, the decrees of councils, the Apostoli-

cal canons, and Apostolical constitutions. But in both systems these oral traditions were considered inadequate. Hence the Jews both in Judea and Babylonia made comments on the Mishna, and thus originated the two *Talmuds*, that is, the Babylonish Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud, and these comments are called the *Gemara*. The writings of Vincentius Lirinensis in the fifth century, Peter Lombard of the twelfth, and Thomas Aquinas of the thirteenth supply the place of the Jewish *Gemara*. Again, both Jews and Christians have elevated their traditions above, and at the expense of the Written Word, and palmed the grossest puerilities and blasphemies upon the infinitely wise and holy God, on the authority of tradition. The result of this traditionary system, both among Jews and Roman Catholics, has been to restrict the reading of the Scriptures, nay, almost to proscribe them."

We are fully convinced that the Roman Catholic system of tradition has the same character and the same defects as that of the Jews. Now, if Christ condemned the latter in the strongest terms, why should we not follow His example and reject the former?

Let us follow the system of the *true* Jews approved by Christ Himself. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants agree that the Old Testament is the type of the Christian Dispensation; that the New Law is foreshadowed in the Old Law. Now, under the Old Covenant the Written Word of God was the rule of faith; it must therefore be the same in the New Dispensation. Under the Old Testament the Sanhedrim or Supreme Council of the priesthood was not invested with infallible authority; under the New Testament, therefore, the episcopate is not endowed with infallibility in teaching. Under the Old Law the revealed truths were first

made known and given to the people by word of mouth through the prophets; under the New Law the same was done by the mouth of Christ and His Apostles. Under the Old Law the Word of God was afterwards written down by the prophets in order to serve after their death as a rule of faith to the Jews; the same was done under the New Law by the Apostles, in order that the Christians might have an infallible rule of faith. In the Old Dispensation not all the prophets wrote; in the New Dispensation not all the Apostles were moved by the Spirit to write. In the Old Testament not all that was revealed to the prophets was written down; in the New Testament all that Christ taught and did is not written down. In the Old Dispensation, that which was written down was considered a sufficient rule of faith; in the New Dispensation, what was written down by the Apostles, together with the books in the Jewish Canon of Scripture, was considered a sufficient rule of faith by the first Christians and by all those who since have followed in their steps. Under the Old Law, the sacred writings show no trace of human art, are written in the most simple style, and adapted to the capacities of all; the same is the case under the New Law, where the writings bear the same impress of a Providential agency. Under the Old Dispensation the exponents of Scriptures were not considered infallible; therefore, the claim to infallibility ought not to be made by the episcopate under the Christian Dispensation.

But Roman Catholics maintain that the unbroken succession of prophets in the Old Law supplied the place of infallibility; there being no such succession in the New Law, the teaching body of the Church requires to be endowed with infallibility.

We deny the *continual* succession of prophets; let Roman

Catholics establish it if they can. Besides, God sent His prophets not to give infallibility to antecedent prophecies, but to prepare the people by degrees for the coming of the Messiah. When He had come, no new prophets were required. His way had been prepared by the prophets, ending with John the Baptist. The fulness of time had arrived, and revelation was completed by the Son of God. His work and His words became historical facts which were recorded in a book by the inspired Apostles, and on them and the prophets the Church was built. The Holy Ghost supplied henceforth the place of the succession of prophets. All that was required to the end of the world was that His doctrine be accepted and established in the hearts of men. The infallible Word of God, which has an innate efficacy, and the grace of the Holy Ghost were amply sufficient for this end.

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## LECTURE V.

### *TRADITION AND SCRIPTURE—REVIEW OF THE ARGU- MENTS DRAWN FROM THE CHURCH'S OFFICE AS GUARDIAN AND KEEPER OF THE BIBLE.*

**R**OMAN Catholics, in order to defend their system of tradition as a rule of faith, maintain that it is clearly set forth in the Scriptures of the New Testament. They contend that it is contained in the very commission which Christ gave to His Apostles ; for He commanded them to *preach*, not to *write* ; from which they conclude that *preaching*, not *writing* was to be the means by which His doctrine was to be propagated and preserved ; and if so, tradition or oral communication was to be the principal depository of faith, and writing only an appendage.

We answer that the oral teachings of the Apostles were not a rule of faith to those who heard them, nor do we deny that there were sufficient evidence of the transmission of the words or the sense of their oral discourses through the channel of tradition, such words or the sense thereof would not be a rule of faith to us ; for our faith must be based on the teaching of the Apostles in whatever way that preaching may reach us. But we maintain that we have no evidence that it comes to us through the medium of tradition ; nay, we have shown the contrary. We believe that the Bible is the only safe source from which we can draw the teaching of the Apostles.

True, preaching is the ordinary means of diffusing the Gospel; but is it not clear that the matter of preaching must be taken from, and based upon, some depository? The Apostles preached as *witnesses* and heavenly-appointed messengers, with the extraordinary mission of planting the Church. Their preaching, therefore, was based upon the immediate revelation of God. But the preaching of the post-Apostolic Church is founded upon that of the Apostles. Now, how could it be founded upon it, unless it be contained in some depository given by the Apostles themselves? And if this depository be the preaching of the Church from generation to generation, or in other words, oral tradition, how can we prove the orthodoxy of our present preaching, except by appealing to the preaching of the preceding generations, which, besides being morally impossible, would also be begging the question—proving the tradition by tradition. The correctness of the preaching of those who take the Bible as the only standard of faith can easily be ascertained by any one who reads the sacred book; whilst the truth of the preaching of those who gather their doctrine from the vast, uncertain and obscure field of tradition cannot be satisfactorily proved, even by the learned divine. The evangelical minister cannot impose upon the people, while the traditionist, who knows that his hearers must take for granted what he preaches, may easily impose upon their credulity.

Roman Catholic divines contend that there are several texts in which the Apostles expressly teach that there are doctrines they did not write down, but which, as a sacred deposit, have been handed down in the Church by oral tradition. They adduce 1 Tim. i., 13: "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me." The Rheinish translators of the New Testament say in their note: "The

Apostles did set down a platform of faith, doctrine, and phrase of catholic speech and preaching, and that not so much by writing, as we here see, as by word of mouth: to which he referreth Timothy over and above in his epistle to him. And how precisely Christian doctors ought to keep the form of words anciently appropriated to the mysteries and matters of our religion."

We answer that this text proves merely that St. Paul had given his beloved son Timothy a "*delineation of sound words*"—*ὑποτύπωσιν υγιαινόντων λογών*—which evidently is a summary of the Gospel-system; and he exhorts him to hold it fast. What has that to do with oral tradition as a system? Of course, the discourses of the Apostles were to those who heard them a rule of faith. We say with Irenæus (Lib. III., cap. 4): "The Apostles preached the Gospel, and after, by the will of God, delivered it to us in writing, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith."

But they insist further that St. Paul proceeds to say in the following verse, "That good thing (literally, that good deposit) which was committed unto thee keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Now, this deposit must be something different from Scripture, probably a creed.

We answer, that it has to be seen what this good deposit—*την καλην παρακαταθηκην*—means; supposing it to denote the Christian doctrine, the text only enjoins Timothy to keep it safe, and is entirely silent as to its being independent of, and distinct from, the doctrines that are recorded in Scripture. But as St. Paul, in the preceding verse, has spoken of the "*delineation of sound words*," it is probable that he is speaking here of something else, probably of his office or gifts. The word *παρακαταθηκη* here has evidently the same meaning as in verse 12, where a similar phrase

occurs—*την παραδηκην μον φυλαξαι*—and where it probably means the gifts he had received.

They adduce, moreover, the following passages in support of their doctrine: “And keep the ordinances (traditions) as I delivered them unto you” (1 Cor. xi. 2) and “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word or by our epistle” (2 Thess. ii. 15). From these texts they conclude that the Word of God is twofold, written and unwritten, and that the Apostle teaches that both are to be held in equal veneration; that the unwritten word, called tradition, is distinct from Scripture and handed down to us by word of mouth.

We answer that the Greek word *παραδοσις*, translated tradition, is of more extensive signification than the word tradition, in the Roman Catholic sense. It means any precept, instruction or ordinance that is *delivered* either in writing or by word of mouth. The Apostle, therefore, means the doctrines or ordinances which he had taught the Thessalonians both orally and in his epistle. Of course, both communications were to be believed with equal veneration by *those who received them from the Apostles*. But the words do not imply that, in succeeding ages, whatever is *reported by the Church* as the unwritten word of God should be believed as revealed truth. We say with Cranmer: “I grant that Paul taught many things by word of mouth, which he wrote not in his epistles to the Thessalonians. But how shall they prove that the same things be neither written by him in any other of his epistles, or in any other place of the whole Bible? For what argument is this? It is not written in this place or to those persons; *ergo*, it is not written in the the Scripture at all. For the shortness of one epistle, or of one sermon, cannot sufficiently contain all things necessary

for our salvation ; and therefore be there many books of the Scripture, that what is so omitted, or not spoken of in one place, or else darkly spoken of, might be plainly written in another place. And for this cause St. Paul writeth to the Colossians, saying, "When this letter is read with you, cause it also to be read to the Laodiceans. And read you also the epistle written from Laodicea." (*Cranmer, Confutation of Unwritten Verities*, ch. x.)

Roman Catholics contend that the *whole* of God's revelation is not contained in the written Word of God ; there must, therefore, be an unwritten word—oral tradition—distinct from Scripture, to supply the deficiencies of the Bible. They endeavour to prove by different texts that the whole revelation is not recorded therein.

We answer: True, not all that Christ did and taught is written down, but we strongly maintain that what is recorded is sufficient for us ; and this the Bible plainly teaches. Let me adduce a few texts.

St. Paul says, (II Tim. iii., 15-17): "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What words could more clearly prove the sufficiency of the Scriptures than these ? From a child Timothy had known the Scriptures ; therefore, they are adapted even to children. They are able to make us wise unto salvation ; therefore, they are not mere words without meaning. All Scripture is given by inspiration ; therefore, not a dead letter ; for the Holy Spirit breathes in it. They are profitable for all the great pur-

poses of our holy religion—"profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And does not all this mean that they are sufficient for our salvation and well-being here and hereafter?

Again, we read (Rom. xv., 4): "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Thus the Scriptures give us learning, and that learning imparts to us the comfort of hope. Could they effect this, if they were insufficient?

They are sufficient, indeed, for finding Christ. "Search the Scriptures; they are they which testify of Me." (John v., 39.) Where else do we learn Christ but in the Scriptures? Let Roman Catholics point out what tradition teaches about Him? The worthlessness of tradition in regard to Christ should alone be a sufficient reason to make us look upon it with suspicion.

St. John says: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Now, if one Gospel was sufficient for this great end, how much more the whole Bible? And if the Old Testament Scriptures are extolled by Christ Himself and His Apostles, as being sufficient to lead us to Him, how much more abundant will be our profit if we add to them the writings of the New Testament!

We have sufficient reason to distinguish two parts in the revelation of God, namely, things of a general or catholic import, and things of a local and individual bearing. The former are those truths which are necessary to the salvation and essential well-being of all mankind; they give to reve-

lation the claim to catholicity. They have been written down. The latter comprise those things which God did in regard to particular persons and nations. They have not all been recorded in the Bible; for as soon as those nations and individuals ceased to exist, such matters lost their importance. Only some instances which serve us as examples for imitation, or as warnings, have been written down. In the Old Testament many dispensations have been recorded which are only of individual, local or national importance; for the Old Law was more or less confined to the Jews, as the chosen people of God; whilst the New Testament bears decidedly a catholic character.

But the advocates of Church infallibility ask, "Who has given us the Bible but the Church? Who tells us that it is inspired? Who determines its canon but the Church? Who preserves it intact but the Church? You cannot, therefore, believe the Scriptures as such, unless you believe first the infallibility of the Church.

Let us examine these questions. Who has given us the Word of God? Not the Church, in the Roman Catholic sense of the word. The prophets and Apostles, the founders of the Church, gave it. In the same manner as the prophets of old gave their inspired writings to the Jewish nation, the chosen people of God, so the Apostles, the witnesses and messengers of Christ, who, in many ways, proved that they had received the Holy Ghost, gave the Christian people their writings containing a record of the wonderful words and deeds of the Son of God. With the same certainty of faith upon which the Jews believed the Old Testament to be inspired, we may believe the New Testament to be inspired; nay, with more certainty, inasmuch as the Old Testament is verified by and realized in the New Testament, the latter being

the fulfilment of the former. This verification and fulfilment contribute greatly to strengthen our faith. The Jews had the Old Testament without an externally infallible Church ; we, therefore, with more reason and certainty, possessing the New Testament, may dispense with the infallible voice of the Church.

The decree of the episcopate would only be an external proof of the inspiration of the Bible. We have many both internal and external proofs of the same inspiration, without having recourse to the infallible authority of the Church. Read the book in a proper spirit and I have no doubt you will agree with me. As the works of creation bear within themselves an objective evidence, that is a reflex of the Creative mind, enabling us, who are created in the image and likeness of God's mind, to perceive their truth ; so also the Bible of God has an internal light and evidence, which, coming in contact with the unclouded and unbiassed mind of man, convinces him that here is truth that can come from no other source but the Infinite Intellect of God. The more you study this book in all its relations, the clearer will its truth shine upon your mind. It is a book which needs no external proofs to assure us of its divine origin ; because it stands upon its own merits. If it were not so, it could not be the rule of faith.

But if you still demand external arguments, there is no necessity for resorting to the infallible authority of the Church. To prove by external arguments, that is, by arguments outside of the book, the inspiration of a *sacred writer*, it is sufficient to prove the inspiration of the *preacher*, and that his writings agree with his preaching. Granted that the written word agrees with the spoken word, to prove the inspiration of the latter is proving the inspiration of the for-

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mer. Now, it is an historical fact that the prophets of old proved before the whole Jewish nation that they were messengers of God, and that they spoke the words which God put into their mouth, for they produced evidence of their divine mission in miracles and prophecy. It is an historical fact that what they spoke has been verified both in the history of the Jewish and other nations, and especially in the New Dispensation itself. They were therefore inspired in the words they uttered. But the divine messengers, believing the revelation they received from God to be of vast importance, not only preached it, but also affirmed that they were moved and influenced by the Spirit of God to write it down for the enlightenment and salvation of all future generations. It is an historical fact that their writings agreed with their words, for the same persons who heard them speak heard also their writings read and had, therefore, the amplest opportunity of comparing the written with the spoken word. They testified by their acts that they found both in agreement. Hence it is that with the same veneration which prompted them to hear and heed the spoken word, they read or heard read the written word ; and as they considered the first to be God's revelation, so likewise were they constrained to receive and accept the other.

The same may be said of the New Testament. The Apostles proved themselves to be divine messengers not only before one nation, but before many peoples and nations. As the word which they preached was divinely inspired, so was likewise the word which they wrote ; because all Christendom bore testimony that their spoken and written words were in perfect unison. Hence the great reverence with which the Christians treated the sacred writings of the Apostles ; hence also the diligence and devotion with which they

perused them in their public and private assemblies. All this proves that they considered them as their rule of faith and practice. The tone of the New Testament writers evidently shows that they considered their writings to be the completion of the Old Testament; they looked upon themselves, therefore, as in the same category or position as the Old Testament writers—the prophets; that is, they believed themselves to be similarly inspired. They held their mission to be that of inspired writers, and God proved to the whole world that they were His witnesses and messengers. That the Scriptures are inspired has, therefore, been admitted as an historical fact; it required no particular decree of the Church to establish them in the minds and affections of Christians. We have the Scriptures then, as such, from the founders of the Church, not from the Church, in the Roman Catholic sense of the word, or from a hierarchy claiming infallibility. Their inspiration, therefore, besides being proved by internal evidence, is also an historical fact supported by the greatest authoritative weight of testimony.

In order to determine the canon or catalogue of the Scriptures, we need have no recourse to an infallible decree of the Church, but enquire again into history; for the question on the canon and the inspiration of the Scriptures are, in a manner, identical.

With regard then to all the books of the New Testament, written by the Apostles, we conclude that they were written by inspiration; for the Apostles were inspired. Their office as founders of the Church demanded this gift; and the promises of Christ, as well as the many miraculous evidences of the special presence of the Holy Ghost proved that they possessed it; hence they repeatedly laid claim to it in their writings. But if the inspiration of the New Testament be

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admitted, we must admit that of the Old Testament. Of Old Testament Scripture St. Peter testifies that "it came not in old time by the will of man, but that holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," (ii Peter i., 21). Of Old Testament Scripture generally, St. Paul writes, "that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." Nay, Christ Himself gives the sanction of His authority to Old Testament Scripture, and its three great divisions, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, for he quoted from them all as authoritative. He declared that all things must be fulfilled which were written concerning Him in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; and He exhorted the Jews to search those Scriptures in which they believed that they had eternal life, for these were they which testified of Him.

The whole body of Christians preserves the Scriptures, and God is with His Church in the preservation of His Word. In this, partly, consists Christ's presence with His Church, and that is, if we may so call it, the external infallibility of the Church. Wherever the Scriptures are received, believed, and carried out, there is the Church of Christ "built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." And they are the foundation because they have given us the Bible.

## LECTURE VI.

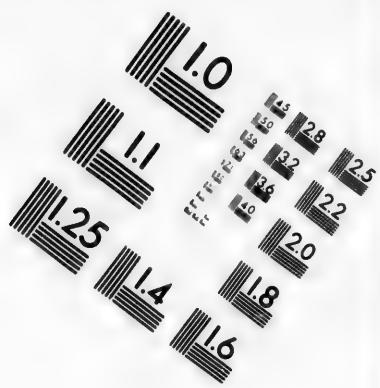
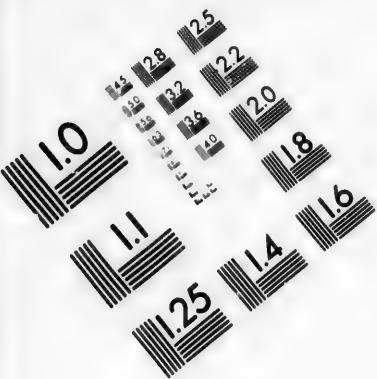
### *EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE CHURCH'S OFFICE AS INTERPRETER OF THE BIBLE.*

**I**N our review of the proofs in favor of the infallibility of the Church we have arrived at those which are taken from the relation between the Bible and the Church, and we considered in our last lecture the argument of Roman Catholics, that the Church requires the gift of infallibility as guardian and keeper of the Bible. We reviewed their doctrine that the Church has given us the Bible, determined its canon, and preserved it intact from corruption and mutilation. They think they have another strong proof for their infallibility-doctrine, resulting from the same relation between the Bible and the Church. They contend that the Church, as the legitimate *interpreter* of the Bible, requires to be endowed with infallibility; for how could we have unreserved confidence in her interpretations if she were not in possession of that gift? As to the necessity for such an interpreter, they deduce it from the obscurity of the Bible, and this obscurity they think must be admitted by all candid readers of the book. Who, they ask, has not met with passages that he could not understand? Who has not met with texts that are unintelligible in themselves, and which no parallel passages are found to explain? Are there not some parts which

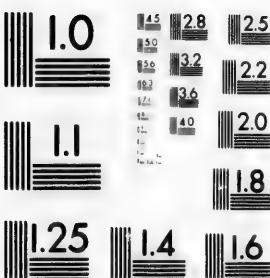
appear to contradict others? Are there not unfulfilled prophecies difficult of interpretation? Who can understand the allegories, figures, and parables with which it abounds? Are there not mysteries of such depth that they require an interpreter to convey them, in some intelligible manner, to men's minds? They maintain that this interpreter can be none other than the living voice of the Church, which is commissioned by Christ to administer to the wants of believers, teaching the people, and feeding the lambs and sheep with pure doctrine.

This argument may, at first sight, appear plausible; it has induced some to enter the fold of the Church of Rome, and entrust themselves and their intelligence to her guidance and authority. True, the Church of Christ is commissioned to teach and feed the flock with the Word of God. But we maintain that she can perform that office without the gift of infallibility. Certainty is all she requires, and this she can secure by a proper measure of application and care.

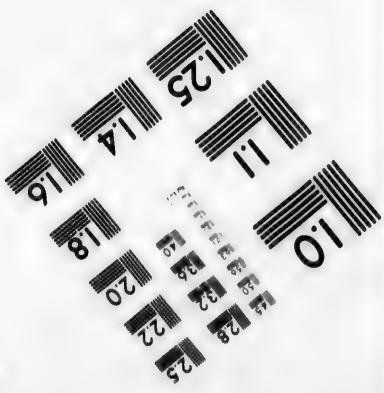
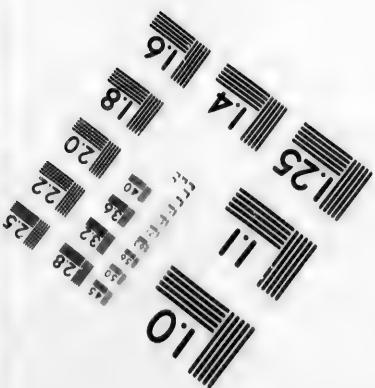
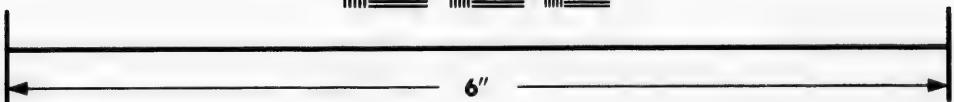
Indeed, the difficulties of the Bible are greatly exaggerated by the advocates of Church infallibility. We think that the greater part of these obscurities and apparent contradictions are relative, not absolute; they have their seat rather in man than in the Bible itself. He who reads little finds more difficulties than he who reads much; he who does not read with attention meets with greater confusion than he who reads attentively; he who does not read in a prayerful spirit finds contradictions and even absurdities where everything is plain and evident to him who is devout; the unlearned and unstable find hard passages which are quite clear to the sober-minded and steady reader. The fact is, men do not read the Bible, or they do not read it with the proper disposition; hence they find it obscure.



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Roman Catholics exaggerate the difficulties of the Bible in order to establish the authority of the Church. But, suppose that we could not understand the Bible without authoritative interpretation by the Church, would this interpretation be intelligible to all? Would it present no difficulties, or would it not become difficult in course of time? We think that the interpretations of the Church are almost certain to be more obscure than the Bible itself. But let us consider more attentively this bulwark of infallibility, based on the pretended obscurity of the Bible.

Roman Catholics agree with us that the Bible is a rule of faith. The question is: Is this rule of faith sufficiently clear of itself, or does it require explanation by a body of men who claim to be endowed, from on high, with the divine attribute of infallibility? Are we compelled to have recourse to the Church in order to understand, with sufficient clearness, how to be reconciled with God and save our souls?

It was not so with the Old Testament, in which is foreshadowed the Christian Dispensation. There was no infallible Church to interpret the sacred books; for it is well known that the supreme council of the Jewish priesthood was not deemed infallible; yet men acquired a sufficiently clear knowledge of the *sense* of the Word of God, and by its light were enabled to walk with God. Can we suppose the New Testament to be less clear and perfect? Would God, in His Word, reveal His truth more dimly to Christians than to Jews?

No; every reader of the Bible must be convinced that the Old Testament contains a larger number of obscure passages than the New; for the books of the former are, to a large extent, prophetical; whilst the writings of the latter are mostly historical, and contain doctrines founded on history

and on fulfilled prophecy. And who does not know that it is more difficult to interpret prophecy than to understand history? Why then should we Christians need an infallible interpreter, when the Jews were able to do without one?

But we possess still greater advantages, not bestowed upon the Jews, by which we are enabled to acquire a sufficiently clear knowledge of revealed truths, without the interpretation of the Church. Roman Catholics will agree with us that under the Old Law the Holy Ghost had not been as yet given, and His peculiar influence had not then commenced to pervade the Church, working in a special manner with the honest searcher after truth. The Jews, therefore, were thrown on the resources of their natural light in interpreting the Bible. How much more able, then, should Christians be to understand God's Word, since they have the promise of the Spirit's assistance? Roman Catholics, instead of belittling God's written Word, and deterring men from opening the sacred volume, on account of its reputed obscurity, should be thankful for the privileges Christians enjoy as compared with Jews, and instead of bolstering up their system of hierarchical infallibility to the disparagement of the Bible, they should implore the aid of the Divine Spirit, who is ever willing and ready to give them a clear understanding of the revealed truths of God so far as may be necessary for their salvation and well-being.

Indeed, what need is there of an infallible interpreter? We are bound to admit that the sacred writers did not address themselves to men of eccentric and distorted intellect who would find or invent difficulties anywhere, or to men of a vain philosophy, against whom St. Paul warns Christians, but to men of sound common sense who will use their judgment in a normal way. We must suppose that God, in pro-

viding a revelation, did not intend to absolve man altogether from the duty of enquiring into truth, thus become a blind recipient of doctrines proposed for his belief by a body of men claiming infallibility. We clearly see that men of common sense—and they are generally in the majority—will, by the aid of God's Spirit, find it no impossible task to find in the Bible as much saving truth as is necessary for them. The sacred penmen wrote for these and for these alone. So long as sober common sense exists in the Church, the Bible will be understood without recourse being had to the interpretations of a hierarchy.

Both the learned and unlearned possess this gift of God ; the Bible, therefore, suits the capacity of all classes of men. As true philosophy is nothing more than the development and science of common sense, even the most profound philosopher will find in the Bible full satisfaction and repose for his intellect. The most simple men, devoid of profound human learning, such as the sacred writers were, address themselves, in the simplest style and the plainest terms, to simple-minded people. Who does not see that God acted thus that all might understand His revelation with sufficient clearness? There is a wise design in all the works of God. We believe this simplicity of style and language has its meaning, and that God, in making use of it, gave us to understand that men of common sense might clearly discern the truths He purposed to reveal for the enlightenment and welfare of mankind. Nay, this very simplicity of language is in itself a gracious and encouraging invitation, on God's part, to hungry and thirsting souls—and they only will profit by it—to come and read and reason together with Him and thus acquire possession of the truth, without the interference of any body of men, however high their ecclesiastical authority may be.

We ask any impartial man, not blinded by the spirit of party, why did God inspire His messengers and move them to write the Bible? Was it that it should be understood by man or that it should be a sealed book? It would certainly be inconsistent with the wisdom of God to bestow a book upon man for his guidance, and at the same time to conceal its meaning. We cannot separate the book from its sense. If the book was given for man's instruction the sense must be clear to those who seek to be instructed by it. From the very fact, then, that God has given us the Bible, we conclude that it is intelligible to the sincere enquirer after truth.

In fact, God could adopt no method more simple and more truly enlightening in order to teach and perpetuate His revelation than to embody it in an intelligible book. And does not history prove that, wherever the Bible is read and studied with befitting earnestness, there true Christianity prevails, pure and intelligent; and that, wherever the system of Church-infallibility holds sway, to its full extent, there is no enlightened and reasonable Christianity, but only error and superstition—not the reality of truth, but the dream of delusion. But we should expect quite the contrary if what Roman Catholics say about the obscurity of the Bible be true. Alas! we fear that the claim to infallibility is merely a subterfuge to defend doctrines that are not to be found in Scripture, or are contrary to Scripture; and that the obscurity is not in the Bible itself, but in the men who assert the infallibility of the Church. In fact, this pretended power of infallible interpretation, instead of clearing away difficulties, tends to propagate errors and serves only as an easy pillow for careless members of the Church.

No; Christ's people do not need such an interpreter. The Bible was understood by its first readers, without the inter-

pretation of an infallible priesthood, why should it not be understood by the devout students who have lived in succeeding ages? Are they less richly endowed with common sense? Are they less dear to God's heart? Or, has the understanding of the Scriptures become more difficult? We cannot allow any of these suppositions. True, our habits and customs, the character of our times and countries, the idioms of our languages and other circumstances differ from those of the sacred writers and of their earliest readers, and this may at first sight, present some difficulties in the way of clearly understanding the Bible. But these difficulties are not insurmountable and require no infallible interpreter; they can all be overcome by proper care and study.

We do not deny that there are difficulties in the interpretation of Scripture; there are passages which have not as yet been fully understood and explained; but we have no need of admitting, on that account, the claims of the Church as an infallible interpreter; for she has proved no wiser than the rest of mankind in the work of elucidation.

The truths of the Bible may be divided into two great classes—simple historical narratives of fact, and doctrine. No one will deny that the former can be easily understood by every attentive reader; we do not mean the *nature* of the facts, but their historical statement. Strictly speaking, we do not understand the internal nature of any fact, even in the natural order. We do not comprehend how a plant grows, but we know nevertheless that it does grow. In like manner, we do not understand how a miracle is wrought, but we know that it is wrought. To know the existence of facts is sufficient for our guidance, both in the natural and supernatural order.

With regard to the doctrines contained in the Bible, they

may be subdivided into two classes—practical ones or moral precepts, and dogmatical ones or doctrines of faith. The former may also be readily understood by men of sound practical common sense; for it is not difficult to understand things of practical import, and the precepts of the Bible are couched in simple and intelligible words.

As for the theoretical parts which contain dogmas of faith, those doctrines that are necessary for our salvation, and form the basis of our Christian life, on which, as it were, the whole of Christianity hinges, or in other words, the essentials and fundamentals are also easily understood by every sincere enquirer. They are expressed in the clearest terms, occur almost on every page of Holy Writ, are stated in a variety of ways, presented in different views and aspects, and illustrated in parables taken from the ordinary occurrences of life. Being the cardinal points of revelation, and as such of the highest importance and interest to every man, the serious enquirer is anxious to know about them, and every one, even the most illiterate, has common sense enough to understand them.

But there are also doctrines in the Bible which are not fully understood, and the time has not even yet arrived when the understanding of them seems to be required. It is not necessary that God's revelation should be fully comprehended in its entirety, all at once, and by every believer. As in the book of nature there are phenomena not fully understood, and which therefore stimulate and excite a laudable spirit of examination and research, so also in the Bible there are passages the meaning of which will be made known at some future time; although that is not necessary in our day for the salvation of the present generation. It will be necessary at some future time; because there is nothing useless in God's works,

especially in His supernatural revelation. When the proper time arrives, God in His all-wise providence will give the key to the true understanding of what remains obscure. Has that Church which claims infallibility in interpretation given an infallible explanation of all parts of Sacred Scripture ? No ; she does not even consider it necessary at present, and certainly could not do it ; or if she could, as she pretends, why does she put her candle under a bushel, and keep her talent for expounding Scripture infallibly thus long wrapped up in a napkin ? Why does she not issue infallible commentaries or expositions of the entire Bible ? She cannot do it and is afraid of committing herself. The pretended gift of infallibility is only a cloak to conceal the nakedness of doctrines not contained in Scripture—a subterfuge of obstinacy in error ; it is, in fact, a weapon employed against the Bible.

He who is not satisfied with the Bible will also be discontented, if he be of a serious and reflecting cast of mind, with the doctrine of Church-infallibility. Every sound mind, under the guidance of God's Spirit, may be satisfied with the Bible and find therein those things which are necessary for his salvation, food and satisfaction for his mind, rest, peace and consolation for his heart, moral strength for his actions.

It is only the men of system,—they who wish to see the whole body of revealed doctrine systematically and scientifically arranged according to human method that find it difficult to understand God's Word ; because they find it a hard, nay, impossible task to arrange the doctrines scattered by God over the different leaves of His written Book under the banner of their preconceived system. They have some favourite tenet, some peculiar point of view, some pet scheme, to which they wish to make everything yield, to which they endeavour to reduce all revealed truth, and by the light of

which they interpret every text. They will certainly find it a difficult task to compress all the truths of the Bible into the narrow limits of a system conceived in the brain of man.

They are like those philosophers who wish to confine all human knowledge within the limits of one favourite principle. As the disputes in philosophy arise from this spirit of systematizing, so also in religion. The book of nature and the book of supernatural revelation are two grand books, the contents of which we can never fully comprehend, and the depth of which we can never fully fathom in this life. But notwithstanding these limits of our understanding, under God's guidance we can gather from the book of nature as much as is sufficient for our temporal life and happiness; and from the Word of God as much as amply suffices for our spiritual life and felicity. We should beware of any tendency to systematizing, but contrariwise, endeavour to keep our minds and hearts open to the truth in all its fulness and purity. The wise philosopher gathers facts from the book of nature wherever he can find them; he is not anxious to confine himself within the narrow limits of a theory, because he knows that every object in nature may be considered from different points of view, and that every aspect of it may form the basis of a beautiful set of truths. It is the same with the impartial religious enquirer. He, too, gathers truth from every leaf of Holy Writ; at each reading, new and beautiful avenues open to his mind, every one of which contains a series of bright and consoling truths, but he does not raise them into an exclusive system. It is sad to reflect that many of the different religious denominations have originated from the spirit of system, from a one-sided and narrow consideration of God's Word. Having established *a priori*, that is, before attentively reading all parts of God's revelation and

comparing Scripture with Scripture, some religious principle, they then proceed to accommodate the interpretation of the Bible to it. We look upon the Roman Catholic Church as the greatest of these systems. She enjoys superiority in point of antiquity, numbers, and external influence; she pretends to interpret and solve all the difficulties of the Bible and offers to her adherents the soft and easy couch of Church-infallibility whereon they may peacefully repose and lull their thoughts into careless security. Hence those who are in her bosom find it difficult to get out, and those who wish to reduce the truths of the Bible to a system feel inclined to enter her fold. The Bible is to them a dead letter; some of their theologians have even gone so far as to call it a certain amount of paper, ink and binding. Why? Because it does not set forth their system; nay, they do not see any system in it at all.

The Bible a dead letter! No! To call it a certain amount of paper, ink and binding is blasphemy. The Bible is the Word of God and as such it is the life; Christ says that man liveth by it. We should bear in mind that there is no difference between the *spoken* and the *written* Word. Now, the words which God speaks are not dead sounds; they are living words, words uttered for our eternal salvation,—words of everlasting life. The Word of God, whether written or spoken, has innate and inherent power. We believe that when it enters the souls of men, God enters into them; for where the Word of God is there is God also; the Holy Spirit takes up His abode there and surrounds the Word of God and the intellect of man with a supernatural light which produces faith. As natural objects, because they are created after their likeness in God's intellect, present internal evidence of their origin when they appear to our intellect which

is enabled to perceive them, because it also participates in the light of God's Mind after whose likeness it was created ; so in like manner and in a far greater measure, the greatest work of God—His holy Word—bears in itself an internal light and the Holy Ghost prepares our minds to apprehend it.

But although such be the case, we are nevertheless bound to use all our endeavours to acquire a true interpretation of the Bible. None should stand alone in this important work. Individual efforts, under the assistance of the Holy Spirit, will certainly be blessed ; but they will not be complete. God has given His Word to men—thinking, enquiring and patient men, and he has promised to the honest seeker the assistance of His Spirit. Is it not evident that all this excludes the fiction of Church-infallibility in Biblical interpretation ?

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## LECTURE VII.

### *REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE CHURCH'S OFFICE AS JUDGE OF CONTROVERSIES.*

**A**S we have already seen, Roman Catholics contend that the gift of infallibility is a necessity arising from the different offices of the Church. We have reviewed, in the preceding lectures, the arguments drawn from her offices of *witness*, *teacher*, and *shepherd*. It now remains for us to consider the proofs derived from her office as *judge in controversies of faith*.

Both from the nature of the Church as a society and from Scripture they conclude that the Church holds the office of judge. As a society she must possess a tribunal capable of settling disputes among her members, and as regards Scripture proofs they contend that the power of binding and loosing conferred on the Apostles and their successors includes authority to decide in controversies of faith. And as her judgment in matters of faith and morals is final here on earth, and demands therefore the implicit confidence of all her members, she must necessarily be endowed with infallibility; otherwise men's minds would remain unsettled; faith would lose its hold; and the gates of hell would prevail against the Church.

We answer that no such office of judging infallibly in all doctrinal disputes is explicitly set forth in Scripture, and we do not see how the power of binding and loosing include it.

There is in it nothing more than the necessary authority which the Church received from Christ to govern herself and to settle all matters of discipline. Beyond this, we fail to see anything tangible. Christ Himself, who knew both what was in man, as also the powers He conferred on His Church, simply warned His disciples against false prophets coming in sheep's clothing, but who inwardly were ravening wolves. And St. Paul says, "There must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (I. Cor., xi. 19.) And the other Apostles speak in a similar strain. In all these warnings they nowhere point to an infallible tribunal by which these heresies may be rebuked and crushed. But they rather appeal to the judgment of the individual. Christ saith, "Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Luke xii., 57.) St. Paul says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." (I. Cor. ii., 15.) "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." (II. Cor. xiii., 5.) "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I. Thes. v., 21.) "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." (I. John iv., 11.) Indeed, no religious controversy can be said to be settled until the respective parties are individually convinced in their own minds. The Church might issue her decrees; but they would have no effect unless this individual conviction were first brought about. It seems clear, then, that individual discernment of the truth is the only means by which the mind can be persuaded, and controversies of faith finally settled.

The Church is the kingdom of Christ—the kingdom of the truth, and every one "*that is of the truth heareth His voice*," and belongs to that kingdom. (John xviii., 37.) Where the truth is, there is the Church. Now we cannot find any other depository of the truth within the Church but the Bible. In

all controversies of faith, therefore, all that the Church can do is to direct the parties concerned to this standard, and those that "*are of the truth*," and have their minds open to conviction will perceive it, and for them the controversy is settled; and as to those who fail or refuse to be convinced, we have to lament and regret with St. Paul, "that there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest."

The advocates of Church-infallibility, in order to uphold their views and maintain their standpoint, exaggerate these doctrinal difficulties and controversies of faith. By so doing they hope to set forth more forcibly the necessity of an infallible judge, and compel men distracted by doubts and difficulties to come within the precincts of the tribunal they have constituted.

Let us briefly consider the nature of these controversies in order to estimate their value and the power of their real and supposed mischief. We may divide them into three classes.

In the first place, there have always been differences of opinion in regard to *disciplinary points*. We must infer that Christ and His Apostles left the discipline of the Church more or less to the free organization of the Christian people, since nowhere in the New Testament do we find a code of disciplinary rules such as was contained in the Old Law. Certain general principles are laid down, but their application is left to the free agency of Christian communities. If we appeal to history we find that even in apostolic times such differences were permitted among the various nationalities. The Oriental liturgies which were certainly composed at an early period, prove the truth of this fact. Liberty as to disciplinary arrangements is one of the Christian privileges of which the Apostles speak when they rejoice that

they are delivered from the bondage of the Old Law. And we think that differences in discipline are in a manner necessary in order that members, according to their different dispositions, may find a place in the Church in which they may feel themselves spiritually free to display fully their activity and energy. Roman Catholics will admit that the settlement of controversies as regards discipline does not require an infallible judge. It is only requisite to follow the principle laid down by St. Paul, "to do everything decently and in order."

We regret, indeed, that disciplinary differences should have been allowed to destroy friendly intercourse and Christian intercommunion between reformed Churches. As they are for the most part agreed on points of faith, why should controversies about discipline divide them? Why allow Christian liberty to destroy the bond of union? Could not both exist together? But these which are our misfortunes, should not delude Roman Catholics into thinking that they are right. They also have their controversies about discipline, and find it difficult, sometimes impracticable, to settle them. Those among them who know their Church thoroughly will confess that the pope finds it an exceedingly trying task, owing to mere disciplinary differences, to retain the different Eastern Churches that have re-united themselves to the See of Rome; and we know of instances where a complete disruption has taken place. Those who are behind the scenes are aware of the constant temporizing forced upon the Roman curia in order to allay disputes on disciplinary points.

The second class of controversies in the Christian Churches regards doctrinal points that may be held either one way or the other, without injury to faith and charity.

There is often more than one interpretation admissible of one and the same text or doctrine ; and whatever interpretation may be adopted, it will tend to one and the same end. As long as the *facts* of revelation are admitted, men may differ in the *manner* of explaining them. These differences arise mostly from the different points of view from which God's revealed truths are considered. Truth is not one-sided, but may be considered in different ways. It sheds its light not only in one direction, but all around ; from whatever side you view it, it remains always intrinsically and essentially the same, but assumes different aspects in its manifestation to us. As the crystal exposed to the rays of the sun remains in itself the same, yet presents to our view different colours as we look at it in different aspects, so God's revealed truths may be viewed, by different persons, from different points ; and although their judgments differ, we cannot say that any of them are wrong. We think that probably all are right, and that if their views were united and reconciled, we should be in possession of the entire truth. Every one will admit that controversies of this nature do not require an infallible judge to determine them. Our rule here should be scrupulously to avoid condemning any one too rashly who may differ from us in his views of revealed truth.

To be permitted to regard doctrines from different standpoints is what we call *liberty of conscience*. It is not, as Roman Catholics object against us, a license to believe whatsoever you wish, but the right use of our reasoning powers in viewing the same text, doctrine, or fact from every point of view. We believe that God, by His revelation, did not intend to destroy our natural powers, or to fetter their use, but to elevate them to a higher and nobler standard. He must have granted us, therefore, liberty of

conscience. It would be a great mistake to suppose that by using this liberty, in a right way, revealed truths will be distorted or destroyed ; on the contrary, they are, by the use of this gift, more firmly established in the hearts of men, not only in one, but in manifold aspects. Although, in its general and main features, the nature of the human intellect is the same in all men, still we must admit individual differences ; and God, in His government of mankind, employs these individual characteristics when He descends with His truth into the human mind. As regards the perception of revealed truths, we should consider man not merely in the abstract, but as he really is, a thinking and inquisitive being, searching after the truth in his own way. We believe that God, as a rule, manifests His truth only to the sincere enquirer ; and this enquiry includes calm discussion or controversy. This stirs the stagnant pools, purifies the spiritual atmosphere, and keeps the soul of man in a healthful condition.

There is, indeed, a third class of controversies involving such doubts as attack and tend to destroy the precious gift and deposit of faith. How are they to be settled ? We answer, in the first place, that such controversies are trials of our faith. God, in His inscrutable providence, permits them, in order to try His people. But how are they to be made aware of the danger ? How may they determine who is right and who is wrong ? Who has the right and authority to determine these controversies, and how may they be effectually settled ? We reply that the danger will be perceived and the enemy be detected and unmasked by those who "are of the truth" and possess God's Spirit. Those, on the contrary, who care not for the truth and do not possess His blessed Spirit, will surely be ensnared and fall. Outwardly, the enemy will sometimes appear to have conquered, so much so that even

the elect will be sorely tried and tempted. Christ Himself has foretold this and warned us of the danger.

History teaches that, when the trial is great, God has raised up champions of Heaven to fan the dormant embers of faith, to light the torch of truth, and to kindle the fire of divine love in the hearts of men. When the people of Israel were in danger of falling into idolatry, God sent inspired prophets to keep them steadfast in the worship of the true God, and in the hope of a coming Redeemer. They were inspired, for they had to arouse the belief in a *future* fact. The champions of Christianity have no need of this gift, as they have to speak of the *past*, and recall the minds of men to a belief in great historical facts which stand forth for the inspection of all, in their full significance and value—the facts recorded in the Bible, which is acknowledged by all Christendom to be the inspired Volume of God. So long as the world stands, that divine book will be an effective rule of faith; and whenever enemies arise against God's truth, they may and will be refuted by that authoritative volume. Should they attack the Bible itself, they will never prevail, for "heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's Word shall not pass away." All that the champions of Christianity whom God raises up in times of trial require to do is to turn the minds of Christians from the delusive teachings of the enemy to the bright facts of God's revelation contained in the Bible, and the facts themselves, by their innate light, will bring conviction and peace to men that "are of the truth" and have their minds open to conviction.

When vain philosophers endeavour to disturb the world by their false principles and teachings in natural and social science, who is to be the judge of controversy between them and mankind? None other than sound common sense, under

the direction of an all-wise Providence. In the same manner, when bad and deluded men, instigated by Satan, teach false and heretical doctrines, all disputes in matters of faith are settled by the sound religious common sense of Christians, the faith implanted in their hearts, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost attracting the well-disposed and inducing them to lean on the Bible and behold therein the true teachings of God.

If controversies arise about the meaning of the Bible, they may also arise, as they have often done before, concerning the definitions and decrees of the Church. In fact fewer controversies have occurred about the sense of the Bible than in regard to the definitions of the Roman Church. It is her policy, so as not to commit herself, to couch them in the most general terms. Hence, in order to understand them and settle the disputes springing out of them, another infallible judge of controversies would have to be appointed, and so on *usque ad infinitum*.

Roman Catholics reply that such would be the case if these definitions were only a dead letter like the Bible. They tell us that they are explained by the living voice of the Church, and can therefore be easily understood by all.

We ask, how does this living voice of the Church, that is, of the united episcopate, reach the individual members? Is it not by the voice of pastors who themselves, in their individual capacity, are fallible? From the mouths of fallible men, therefore, they must obtain the infallible interpretation of the decrees of the Church. We, on the contrary, maintain that by sound common sense, with the assistance of God's Spirit, we obtain the true meaning of the Bible so far as is necessary for our salvation. And the Bible was given us as a guide to Heaven, and for that purpose alone. Our posi-

tion is simple and the only one that is tenable, whilst that of Roman Catholics is full of insurmountable difficulties.

They admit that the pastors by whom the people are instructed are individually fallible, but they contend that they are infallible when their explanation agrees with that of the united episcopate.

We do not see how that can make them infallible. The most that can be said is that they teach the truth when that which the episcopal body teaches is true. But there is a great difference between being infallible and teaching the truth. The former term is more comprehensive than the latter, and demands that the pastors, besides teaching the truth, should be so utterly incapable of error, that, when they speak, the hearers, without enquiring into the proofs of the doctrines set forth by them, must believe what they teach to be true, *because* they teach it.

Moreover, how can they discover whether the pastor teaches the doctrines of the Church, unless they compare his teachings with the definitions and decrees of the Church, or with the living voice of the dispersed episcopate—the *ecclesia dispersa*? In the former case, they would fall into what they call the great Protestant error, of making the dead letter the judge of controversies; and in the latter case, they would have to enquire what the bishops all over the world teach concerning the point in controversy, which, besides being practically impossible, could not produce in their minds an in controvertible faith. After all, then, the living voice of the Church, in matters of controversy, is but an empty sound—*vox et præterea nihil*.

“The Scripture is the rule, the only rule for Christians whereby to judge controversies. Every man is to judge for himself with the judgment of discretion, and to choose either

his religion first, and then his Church, as we say ; or, as Roman Catholics say, his Church first and then his religion. But by the consent of both sides, every man is to judge and choose ; and the rule whereby he is to guide his choice, if he be not as yet a Christian, but a natural man, is reason ; if he be already a Christian, Scripture ; which we say is the rule to judge controversies by, which may arise among Christians who admit Scripture to be the Word of God. But that there is any man or any company of men appointed to be judge for all men, that we deny ; and that we believe Roman Catholics can never prove. The Bible has the properties of a rule ; it is fit to direct any one that will make the best use of it, to that end for which it was ordained : and that is as much as we need desire. For, as if I were to go on a journey and had a guide who could not err, I needed not to know my way ; so, on the other side, if I know my way, or have a plain rule to know it by, I shall need no guide. The Scripture in things necessary is plain and perfect ; and men are obliged, under pain of damnation, to seek the true sense of it and not to wrest it to their preconceived fancies. Such a rule, therefore, to sincere and serious men cannot but be very fit to end all controversies that are *necessary* to be ended. For others that are not so, they will end when the world ends, and that is time enough." (Chillingworth.)

When we speak of Scripture as the judge of controversies, we must not separate from it the assistance of the Holy Ghost. The Bible is His work from beginning to end. He inspired and dictated it for the express purpose that men might come to the knowledge of the truth. Do not think that His enlightening work was at an end after He had dictated the last sentence of the Bible, for He must yet secure the end and purpose for which He gave us the inspired book. We believe,

therefore, that He gives men the desire and will to enquire and seek after truth in its pages ; that He assists the sincere enquirer with His enlightening grace ; and finally leads him into all truth. Although, sometimes, the religious horizon may appear darkened by the clouds of fierce controversy, the Holy Ghost, in His own good time, will dispel them all, and eternal truth will again shine out in all its brightness.

By divine right, then, heresies are condemned in God's Word. The infallible tribunal composed of a company of men could not more effectually settle controversies of faith ; but, on the contrary, would afford an opening for establishing, in place of Christ's kingdom, a kingdom of this world. It would offer a pretext for settling disputes not by mere definitions only, but by inquisitions and bloody persecutions, as the history of the Roman Catholic and other corrupt Christian bodies clearly shows. The claimants to infallibility were not content with anathemas, but clamoured for the extirpation of the heretics ; and it is a remarkable fact that no Church ever claimed infallibility until she had obtained political power and influence to persecute and destroy the heretic.

We are certain that God's Word and His Spirit are *de jure* the judge of controversies. We are equally certain that *de facto* heresies will always exist, for Christ Himself foretold it. There exists no tribunal which can *de facto*—effectually—settle controversies of faith, that is, silence heretics and sweep heresies from the face of the earth. The Church of Rome has tried it ; but she has never succeeded. The complete and final destruction of error must be left to God alone. Those who "are of the truth," will hear Christ's voice and belong to His kingdom of truth ; those who are not of the

truth will persist in their error. There will be tares among the wheat, and Christ alone can effectually separate the one from the other and present to His Father a glorious Church, without wrinkle or spot.

## LECTURE VIII.

### *INFALLIBILITY NOT NECESSARY FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.*

**T**HE rule of faith ought to be the focus on which all the light of the Church concentrates, the source from which all her perfections emanate, the principle that gives vitality to all her offices, and the bond of union that unites her members in faith and charity. We shall consider to-day the latter of these properties.

Roman Catholics points with the finger of scorn at the disunited and distracted state of Protestantism. Behold, they exultingly exclaim, to what interminable divisions the Bible, interpreted by the light of private judgment alone, has led ! They glory in the aspect of compact unity which their Church presents to the world ; and although they may have their doubts and misgivings on many points, yet they see nothing outside her pale which, in their sense, can be called unity, and therefore make up their minds to live and die Roman Catholics. They are, moreover, confirmed in their adherence, when they see weary and dissatisfied members of Protestant Churches seeking refuge from distraction in Roman Catholic unity. Now, as this unity is brought about by the doctrine of Church-infallibility, they conclude that she must be endowed with this gift from on high.

We, too, teach that the Church of Christ must possess unity, and that this unity is not a mere union or voluntary

association which may be entered into or abandoned at one's will and pleasure, but, like the unity of the human body, results from the very organization of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. It is the organic unity of a society, which does not depend on the will of man, but is established by Christ Himself and compacted together by the Holy Spirit. It is not anything added from without, but it is the result of the *inner life* of the Church itself. Unity manifests itself in association ; but association is not always the sign of organic unity.

We differ, therefore, from the Roman Catholics in regard to the nature of this unity of the Church. In the Roman system it consists in *centralization* : in the strict subjection of the laity to the clergy, of the priests to the bishops and of all to the pope. History informs us that this centralization was perfected by degrees, until at last all unity, together with the gift of infallibility, became centered in the pope. Now, such a centralization, however specious it may appear, at first sight, is too complicated and inconvenient, when we consider that it has to keep together a society dispersed over the whole world. To throw the whole burden of spiritual unification on the shoulders of a company of men, or of one man, and he, too, an old man whose energy is gone and whose mental discernment and penetration must naturally be supposed to be on the wane, seems to be tempting God and compelling Him to perform a perpetual miracle, and we do not find that the pope has the promise of such a miracle, nor, indeed, does he show any sign thereof.

History teaches that centralization in vast secular empires inevitably tends to become the germ of weakness and decay, and we do not see any reason that would justify us in making an exception in favour of ecclesiastical governments.

Hence, may not the coping stone of papal infallibility, that was placed on the Roman edifice in the Vatican council, be too heavy for its strength and prove the beginning of its final downfall? May not Rome, by aiming at too much, lose all? Formerly Roman Catholics might with some pride have gloried in the unity of their Church, as the grand rule of catholicity: *quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus* gave it, to a certain degree, a reasonable and spiritual nature; but have they cause to do so still? Are there not reasons for looking into the future with gloomy foreboding?

The Roman Catholic mind seems to be so thoroughly imbued with the mediæval idea that the Church is a monarchy, that it can entertain no other conception of unity than that of a monarchical one. Now, that the Church is capable of such a union is not the question, nor do we assert that it is altogether against the genius of Christianity that Christians should unite under one ecclesiastical government where and when such a union would be expedient and productive of good. We do not even dispute that the Church, under the Roman empire, did approximate closely to such a unity.

But we contend that a unity of that kind would be merely of *ecclesiastical appointment*. We cannot allow that it is necessary or was ever intended by the Divine Master. We believe that all things *necessary* to the constitution of the Church are undoubtedly mentioned in Scripture. Now, the sacred writers, when they speak of the unity of the Church, never state that it should be preserved by a *general government* endowed with infallibility. We find, on the contrary, that the Apostles in founding Churches disregarded such a rule of unity. If they had established such a central power, they would have mentioned the person or persons who were invested with so important an authority, laid down rules for

its right guidance and safeguards against its possible abuse. They would have exhorted their converts to appeal to it whenever necessary. Schisms and heresies would have been removed by it. They themselves would have taught by their own example how to treat and reverence such a supreme authority. But what do we find? Each Church separately ordering its own affairs in its own way and without reference to others. Any one reading the writings of St. Paul to particular Churches must be convinced that each Church was endowed with perfect liberty to manage its own affairs, settle its own disputes and govern its own members. We find, indeed, that they had intercommunion one with another; relieved each other in their poverty and distress, assisted each other in settling controversies and removing heresies, but nowhere do we find a general government in existence such as Roman Catholics assert to be essential to the unity of the Church.

In fact, how could it have been in accordance with the nature and genius of Christianity which, as our Saviour affirms, is a *kingdom not of this world?* An ecclesiastical prince, with a general government, would soon degenerate into a temporal prince surrounded by all the worldly pomp of sovereignty, using all kinds of worldly means and doubtful political intrigues to support his dignity. And has not all this come to pass with the Church of Rome? Has she not been the great political Church of the world ever since she put forth her claim to infallibility? What other Church has been so constantly embroiled in political intrigues? What other Church meddles so much in politics, in order to control and subordinate the State? Such being the nature of this centre of unity, must we not conclude that the unity resulting therefrom is merely a political unity?

We believe not only that Christ never intended to have the members of His Church bound together in the kind of unity Roman Catholics advocate, but we feel certain that it must always be injurious to the Church, as history amply proves. Indeed, to what advantage could such a connection of Churches, cemented by centralization, tend in promoting the great design of Christianity, which is to bring man to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, to save their souls, to sanctify them, to implant in their hearts the love of God and of their fellow men—in a word, to make them good Christians? All these ends may be obtained without combining men into such a union.

Whatever Roman Catholics may say to the contrary, it is evident that the unity which they predicate of the Church of Christ comes from without, not from within; it results in the blind obedience of the members to the authority of men claiming infallibility, and from a rigorous administration of discipline. The unity which we want must be organic, that is, *proceeding from the inner life* of the Church and manifesting itself in compassing those ends for which Christianity was established. We want nothing more or less than that unity which is plainly set forth in Scripture.

The subject is highly interesting; but as time compels me to be brief, I can merely touch upon the principal points. I refer you for a fuller consideration of the subject to Dr. Barrow's excellent "*Discourse on the Unity of the Church.*"

What then does Scripture teach in this regard? In the first place, that the Church is one by *consent of faith* in the truths which God has revealed. The Church is the kingdom of the truth, and those that "are of the truth" will be one in faith. They may have different explanations of facts, but in regard to the facts themselves they will have one and the

same faith. We are next taught by Scripture that all Christians are united by the *bonds of mutual charity and good will*. "Hereby," says Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another." We find, again, that all Christians have one and the same *spiritual relationship*, they are the sons of God and brethren of Christ. That is the unity of Christian brotherhood. They are members of Christ—subjects of that spiritual kingdom whereof Christ is the Head. We are further informed that Christians are linked together in peaceable concord, communicating in works of piety and devotion, defending and promoting the common interests of their profession; that they are united by the same sacraments; that by baptism they profess their faith in a common salvation and are admitted into one and the same Church; and that in the Lord's Supper they approach the same sacred table as brethren professing their faith in Christ as the common food of their souls, the Bread of Life that came down from heaven. They are exhorted to assist one another in the common defence of the truth when assailed, in the propagation of the Gospel and the enlargement of the Church. We are further taught that Christians should pray and converse together for edification and advice; and as the clergy are the leaders of the people, we find them foremost in all these offices of union and mutual intercourse between the different members and branches of the Church. The essential rules of discipline laid down in the Bible are few and simple, and it is very easy for Christians to be united in them.

Such are the principal features of the unity which Scripture sets forth as an essential characteristic of the Church of Christ. How different from the Roman system!

Is it not evident that the unity of the Church, which has

to comprise all nations and kinds of the earth, men of the most diverse temperament and dispositions, habits and customs, must not be hampered by too many conditions? It must be eminently catholic, that is, as universal as the idea of man and adaptable to every human individual. As mankind is *one*, notwithstanding the great variety of the human species; so also the Church of Christ must be *one*, for she is intended to embrace all the species. And as the unity of mankind is natural and independent of man, in like manner the unity of the Church proceeds from the same supreme Author, and is independent of any maxims of unification man may devise. The God and Father of mankind is also the God and Father of the Church. In reality, then, the Church and mankind are not two distinct societies. The truths God has revealed and the works He has wrought are intended for the benefit of all mankind; and whosoever perceives and embraces them by faith, belongs *consciously* to the Church. The *truth* is the chief object of God's loving concern for mankind, not this or that particular religious association. The truth alone has the power of uniting men together in a society that does not depend on their will or pleasure; hence those that "are of the truth hear Christ's voice;" they are those "that should be saved and are added to the Church." In reality, then, as the truth is intended for the whole race of Adam, all mankind should be God's Church; but as all men do not perceive the truth, or are unwilling to embrace it, only the holders and adherents of it are said to form the Church of Christ. Hence we may easily perceive that the Church is not an *imperium in imperio*—a kingdom within a kingdom, a society within the great human society—but a *part* of the kingdom, a part of the Church of mankind, but that part, indeed, which possesses the truth intended for all,

obeys the laws and promotes the true interests of the country and the world. As the class of good citizens do not form an independent and separate kingdom within the kingdom, but only constitute the better portion that may say to the rest: We are citizens like you, but we wish that you were such as we are and would see as we see the true interests of the nation: So, in like manner, the members of Christ's Church may say to the rest of the human family. We, like you, belong to the great Church of mankind; you do not see this fact, but we do, and we desire you to see and acknowledge it also; we perceive many truths revealed by God for your and our benefit; you do not perceive them. We wish you could; we see that God has done many things in your and our behalf; you do not see it. We wish you would acknowledge this likewise; in a word, we desire that you would see and act as we do; then all mankind would be the Church of God indeed.

The truth, then, revealed by God through Jesus Christ, is the bond of unity in the Church, and as this truth is nowhere deposited but in the Bible, we must conclude that this sacred volume is the source and centre of all Christian unity. "We know that the advocates of Church-infallibility think themselves such necessary instruments for all good purposes, that nothing can well be done unless they do it; that no unity or constancy in religion can be maintained, but inevitably Christendom must fall to ruin and confusion, unless they support it. But we are certain that Christ upon His ascension gave us His Apostles for all these excellent purposes, by their preaching while they lived, and by their writings for ever." (Chillingworth.)

We see no other means of unity but the Bible. Yet Roman Catholics sneeringly bid us look at our divisions and

tell them what unity the Bible has given us. Nay, some of our Protestant brethren feel discouraged, and in their perplexity know not whither to turn.

Methinks, that neither Roman Catholics nor alarmed Protestants understand the true nature of unity. They imagine that some Church of *one* denomination or *one* communion must be always, to the peremptory exclusion of all other communions, the *whole* Church of Christ. They do not reflect that unity does not exclude variety, but includes it, in beautiful harmony. As variety in unity constitutes the beauty of nature, so in the Church of Christ, there is a beautiful variety in a harmonious unity.

Let them look at the first ages of Christianity, before Rome held sway over the greater part of the Church. What unity do we find in those times? Surely not that which we behold in the Roman Catholic Church, for there was no general government uniting them all. But in one and the same Church of Christ we find different associations called Churches, not indeed subject one to another, yet cherishing the same Bible, professing the same faith, united in love and charity, using the same ordinances, assisting each other in settling controversies, composing schisms and removing heresies by mutual counsel in conferences and synods; for they had intercommunion with each other in all things pertaining to the Christian religion. Still they differed in many things; they had not the same form of worship, and the only rule they appear to have held in common was "to do everything decently and in order." There was not the same discipline in all Churches; they were greatly governed by circumstances in those changeful times of the decay and fall of the Roman empire and invasion by northern barbarians. Yet who will affirm that there was no unity in those primitive

times of Christianity, albeit one widely differing from the Roman ideal?

Now let us come to the existing divisions of Protestantism. Have we really so much reason to be alarmed and dissatisfied as some of our discouraged ones would make us believe. We must bear in mind that the Church of Rome had completely destroyed the primitive *liberty in unity*; Our reformers had not only to restore this liberty, but in many cases to recall even the very idea of it, so completely had it been obliterated by the habit of blind obedience to papal government. Ought we not to be thankful that this blessed liberty in unity has been restored to us, after many painful struggles? It could hardly be expected that this liberty would be rightly understood and appreciated all at once; for such mighty reformations require several generations before they come to full maturity. The old leaven of popery continued to work in the Protestant masses, for a considerable time. Modern Church-history informs us that, while with many this liberty degenerated into licence, the iron heel of repression was put on it by others. Thus, instead of one papacy, we had virtually several Protestant popedoms; and while in other cases men were allowed to wander from sect to sect, they were often denied reasonable liberty within the pale of one and the same sect. In short, not having the sagacity of experience possessed by the Church of Rome, many blundered worse than that Church had ever done, except in its early tentative centuries. But let us forget the past and look at our present state.

We have the blessing of religious liberty, but have we unity? Much more than many of us will allow. With the exception of a small fraction, whom we do not consider as belonging to us, all our Churches are *evangelical*, believing

in Christ the Son of God. The Bible is our common rule of faith. We all contribute of our means to have it printed and circulated—we all stand together on the common platform of the Bible Society. All our denominations have the same faith ; we may lawfully differ in the exposition of revealed truth, but we all believe in the same way of salvation. Here again the Tract Society is a common platform on which we meet together. We are united in Christian works of charity and benevolence. We admit each other to the same sacraments, and preach the same Gospel. And to what do our differences amount ? To slight variations of view on Church-government and the manner of conducting public worship. But we are not guilty of these differences ; we have not made them—we have inherited them, and as we are influenced by education and circumstances, we have accepted them. We are justified in thinking that we are really more at one than would externally appear. What does that Protestant Alliance mean, whose annual meetings are held with Christian joy and enthusiasm ; we think it is the manifestation of an organic Christian unity brought about by the Spirit of God. True, every association is not organic, but organic unity, arising from within, manifests itself in association ; and may not the Protestant Alliance be the result of such inner unity ? May it not proclaim to the world that we are united ; I do not mean that the different denominations as such, that is as organized bodies, are at one with each other, for these are still, unfortunately, bigoted and exclusive, but that a vast number of Christians within these bodies, and in spite of them, are united in faith and charity, and desire to manifest this their inner union by an outward alliance. And is not this Alliance a remarkable proof of the strong aspiration of Christians for an outward

unity untrammelled by the jarring influences of a bigoted and narrow-minded denominationalism? We think the laity of our evangelical Churches are more united in the ever one and the same Church of Christ than the clergy; we are sorry to admit that the latter hold more or less aloof from mutual intercourse and Christian intercommunion. Is there no way of burying old prejudices and theological feuds, without compromising principle? The Spirit of God seems to be moving within the Church, expanding the views of men and enlarging their hearts. Yet we do not desire a greater and closer unity than there was in the primitive Churches; it would, perhaps, not be desirable to dispense altogether with the different denominations. Such a measure would probably be injurious to Christian liberty and energy and might imperceptibly lead us to a new kind of popery—the natural outgrowth of centralization in ecclesiastical matters. But what we want is to take the sting out of denominationalism. Away with that denominational envy which is the mother of uncharitableness! Remove that wall of exclusiveness which is akin to popery! Let there be liberty in the great Church of Christ. Let no new sects be formed for every immaterial difference in doctrine or liturgy. Let that spiritual and ecclesiastical pride be removed which has been the source of all the schisms and heresies within the Church; and, being united in faith and rooted in charity, let us abound in good works and promote the cause of the Church of Christ, within which there may be separate denominations analogous to the various associations and Churches of primitive Christianity. Yes, let us look upon them as analogous to those, taking into consideration the different circumstances of times and countries.

We think that Roman Catholics have not much reason for sneering at us on account of our differences, especially when we consider the inherent liberty of Protestantism and the outspoken character of its members. The divisions that we have openly acknowledged, Roman Catholics harbour concealed within their Church, as we shall see in a subsequent lecture.

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## PART II.

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*THE PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE INFALLI-  
BILITY-DOCTRINE IN THE CHURCH  
OF ROME.*



## LECTURE I.

### *THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH-INFALLIBILITY HAS NOT SETTLED CONTROVERSIES OF FAITH.*

IN the preceding lectures, we have briefly reviewed the arguments which Roman Catholic divines generally advance to prove their Church's claim to infallibility, and found that they are not conclusive. We have seen, too, in what sense the Church of Christ is infallible. Our researches have led us to the conclusion that the Word of God, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, is the infallible element in the Church. We believe that both in the Church of Rome and in the other Christian bodies those that are saved, are saved through this enlightening influence and no other. Whatever Roman Catholic zealots may say to the contrary, we are thoroughly convinced, that the doctrine of hierarchical or papal infallibility and the other distinctive Roman dogmas occupy very little the minds of the Christians within their communion; these distinctive tenets are, as it were, in the background of their souls and do not enter into their spiritual life. Besides, there are great truths underlying the errors of Rome, and the Spirit of God leads the sincere men among them to minimize the distinctive erroneous doctrines and thus to cling to these truths, separating the chaff from the wheat. Nay, the greater the errors, the greater the truths that underlie them. Now, sincere men, in their process of minimizing, lose sight of the errors, fasten their at-

tention solely on the truths and believe in them as the objects of their faith. Thus we are justified in believing that good Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians have the same faith and are animated by the same spirit all the world over. The Spirit of God leads both, although in different ways, to the knowledge of the same truth. This reflection should serve as a caution to our bigotry.

The result of our preceding enquiries is, that *de jure* the Roman Catholic hierarchy is not infallible. We could have compassed the same object by proving that the Church of Rome has actually erred, distorting some doctrines and adding others to the deposit of faith, in a word, that she is *de facto* fallible; for the institution that is not infallible *de facto* cannot be said to enjoy this gift *de jure*. The errors of the Church of Rome have been so often and so thoroughly discussed and refuted, that we consider it needless for us to enter extensively upon this field of controversy. We shall rest content in the remaining lectures of this course, with indicating some features that may assist us in understanding the nature and spirit of the Roman system.

And, in the first place, we maintain that Roman Catholics do not realize and attain the end for which they contend, that the gift of infallibility has been bestowed upon the Church. We shall show, in this lecture, that the Roman hierarchy, with the pope as its head, although claiming infallibility for that purpose, is unable to settle controversies of faith.

At the outset, in settling such controversies, they start with the supposition that he who raises them must be governed by evil passions and instigated by Satan to differ from the teaching of the Church; for, since they believe her infallible and her doctrine the truth, they conclude that doubt as to

the truth of her teaching can arise from wicked motives alone. But above all, they suspect his sincerity ; for they assume that he cannot but know the truth of the Church, and that he knowingly and obstinately resists it. They believe that their Church bears so luminously the marks of being the authorized expounder of truth, to wit, her unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity, that whatever reasons may justify an outsider in not embracing her doctrines, a member who is surrounded by all her light cannot have no plea justifying him in controverting her teaching. They cannot plead for him "invincible ignorance" or the love of truth, and therefore their system compels them to doubt his sincerity, from the very outset. What an impression must the theory of his being a turbulent spirit and an obstinate heretic, entertained *à priori* by that infallible tribunal, produce on the enquirer after truth who is conscious of his honesty ! Instead of inspiring him with a spirit of reconciliation and submission, it tends to alienate his affections from the hierarchy, for he feels that his moral character is impugned. He is anxious to have light in his difficulties, but the very manifestation of his doubts is looked upon with suspicion. He is conscious that there is no good understanding between him and that part of his Church which claims infallibility. Does such an impression conduce to a satisfactory settlement of the controversy ?

But will it be settled if it be allowed to go before the judge ? It is an acknowledged maxim that, in determining any matter in dispute, the judge shall not be one of the litigant parties ; but the contrary is the rule in Roman Catholic controversy. When the enquirer doubts the teaching of the hierarchy and defends the opposite doctrine, who is the judge between them ? The Bible ? No. Tradition ? No ; but

the hierarchs themselves. And what judgment will they give? Undoubtedly, they will confirm their own teaching, however erroneous it may be. Is it not plain that controversies of faith cannot be settled in this manner? They are rather perpetuated by perpetuating the teaching which gave them life and being.

Now, is the character of these judges such as to inspire confidence? The court consists either of the whole episcopate, or, since the Vatican council, of the pope alone, with his curia. Does this court bear unmistakably the marks of infallibility? By no means. Commencing with the head and passing a superficial glance over the episcopal body, it bears the unmistakable marks of partiality. They are a body of men like other men, full of human frailties, blinded by the glitter and pride of their dignity, and by human passions, quick to anger, slow to forgive. They try to overpower the accused enquirer by the external show of ecclesiastical splendour and despotism. There is no worse despotism than that of spiritual lords. They themselves hold the doctrine in controversy; therefore the Church holds it; therefore all the members must believe it. Whosoever does not believe as they do is a heretic, and must be dealt with accordingly. Can the enquirer be convinced by such a body of spiritual lords? Is this to be our kind and loving Mother-Church?

How different from theirs is our judge of controversies. We find no difficulty in believing calmly, in our own mind, that a Book whose pages we read with all sincerity in our closet is the infallible Word of God; but we find it impossible to believe that such a body of spiritual lords is infallible. In the Bible we see the marks of infallibility; in the episcopal body or the pope we fail to detect them. When we read the

Bible, our passions are not aroused and goaded by ill-treatment or the vindictiveness of other men ; but if we should have to listen, for the salvation of our souls, to such a tribunal of controversy, there is every danger that our tempers would be provoked by their spiritual pride and priestly despotism.

And how does the episcopate or the pope, as a tribunal, proceed against him who is to be judged ? They exclude discussion, and demand unreserved, absolute and immediate subjection. They ask of him : Art thou the author of this publication, and dost thou hold such and such a doctrine ? If the answer be in the affirmative, they demand recantation ; and if that be refused, condemnation immediately follows.

Before giving a decision, the judge should follow the maxim : *Audi alteram partem.* But the Roman Catholic judge does not follow this principle ; for, although himself one of the interested parties, he denies the benefit of defense to the accused. The real question should be, not whether the party holds such and such a doctrine, but whether it be true or erroneous ; and it should be so settled that real conviction of the mind would result. To decree the truth or falsehood of a controverted doctrine, without any previous discussion whatever, and to demand immediate and absolute submission, savours altogether of spiritual despotism, and cannot satisfy the mind ; and where the mind is not persuaded, there is no real settlement of controversy. Such a settlement requires to be rational, for men will not allow themselves to be led and silenced like ignorant brutes ; they demand to be treated with the deference due to rational beings. If a member, therefore, disagrees with the pope or the bishops of the Church, in matters of faith, he must make up his mind beforehand that he will be condemned by them if he does

not submit to their decree; or if he chooses not to incur the wrath of a powerful hierarchy, he is compelled to hold his doctrine in secret. Yes, this fear of incurring condemnation from the spiritual lords tends to fill the Church of Rome with hypocrites and hidden unbelievers.

In controversies about spiritual matters, or the internal concerns of the soul, the rules of adjudication should not be borrowed from the procedure of secular tribunals; for these judge only of external things, and settle disputes by examination of facts and application of laws, without intending to produce internal conviction in any of the litigants; it may be produced, but it is not essential to the settlement of the dispute. It is far otherwise in spiritual things. Here the controversy cannot be considered as settled if the mind has not been convinced. Now, such a convincing settlement can be better produced by God than by man; and we believe that He effects it by His Word. The silent page of God's Word would speak more powerfully and efficaciously than the thunders of a privileged hierarchy.

This will appear still more evident if we consider the nature of their decrees and definitions. One might expect that they would use such clear and precise language as to exclude every misunderstanding. But it is a well-known fact that the terms employed are obscure, and unintelligible save to a privileged class. In fact, they have a terminology of their own, understood only by their theologians. In framing their definitions and decrees every endeavour is put forth to avoid committing themselves. Human prudence lurks in every word and phrase. Now, definitions begotten in human prudence, and couched in cautious terms will also be read and appreciated with human prudence, and accepted with a minimizing caution; for the Spirit of God does not speak

through them. How can it be expected that they should produce the conviction of divine faith? They may beget illusion for a time, but not conviction. Hence we find that the decrees of this infallible ecclesiasticism always excite new and fiercer controversies—some interpreting them in this, others in that sense. Councils have had to be multiplied, decree after decree issued, and still the controversy has remained substantially as it was before. Of what use is ecclesiastical infallibility if its decrees and definitions do not settle controverted questions, if its terms are intelligible only to those who are advanced in theology, if even they stand in need of another interpreter? I must use my human reason and all the rules of criticism in order to understand them. If my interpretation of the Bible does not give me divine revelation, as they teach, but only my own thoughts, how can my interpretation of papal or episcopal decrees give me anything more than my own private views of them? How can I possibly by them obtain divine truth? It is evident, therefore, that the Roman Catholic infallibility does not meet the end for which it is asserted.

They reply that the decrees and definitions are the utterances of the *living* Church, and that the living Church will explain them by the *living voice*, if they require it.

We answer, *written* definitions and decrees are, in the Roman Catholic sense, another Scripture which requires interpretation. Now how may I come within the hearing of the living voice of the Church in order to obtain an authentic and infallible explanation? Surely, the individual priest or bishop to whom I have recourse is not the Church, but a fallible man, like myself, and may labour under the same, nay, worse difficulties than my own. Shall I write to the pope? Will he consider my application worthy of a reply?

And if he writes to me, will his letter be an answer *ex cathedrâ*, in order to assure me of its infallibility? Or, will it be only a private letter? How may I know it to be *ex cathedrâ*? And after all, if *ex cathedrâ*, it would be only a letter, a *written* document, another Bible, and how shall I interpret it? Shall I go to Rome, to obtain infallible instruction out of the infallible pope's own mouth? Will he admit me to an audience? If so, will he speak to me *ex cathedrâ* or only as a private ~~visitor~~? We are told that *ex cathedrâ* utterances ought not to be too common, and should be given only in extraordinary emergencies. How, then, shall I be able to hear the living voice of the Church, in order to remove my doubts? When Roman Catholics inveigh against the dead letter of the Bible, they are logically compelled to inveigh also against the dead letter of the decrees of their popes and councils. They should consequently give us easy access to the pope speaking *ex cathedrâ* or to a permanent general council. The latter would be a chimera. We know from history with what great difficulties the assembling of general councils has always been beset. They have required almost always the assistance of secular governments; and besides, such a permanent council would permanently deprive the flocks of their pastors; it would, therefore, involve moral and physical impossibilities. Whom, therefore, does the living voice of the living Church reach? Only those who were present in the general councils hitherto held. Oh, happy few! You alone have enjoyed the blessing of receiving the rule of faith that Christ intended for all his people; of receiving it, not entire, but in some points only—those that were then defined! What a complicated machinery is this Roman Catholic tribunal for settling controversies of faith! And after all, how inaccessible! how utterly useless

for the purpose it is intended to compass ! What an imposition upon the deluded members !

After all, they are compelled to give up their boasted *living* voice of the Church, and to come back to *written documents*, the definitions and decrees of their councils and popes. Do they thus not virtually acknowledge that these are *their Bible*? To a Bible, then, as a rule of faith, they must return, although it be a Bible made by *themselves*—a Bible the canon of which is uncertain and constantly on the increase as in the process of ages definitions and decrees are multiplied—a Bible the contents of which are not within the covers of one volume, but scattered throughout the ponderous folios of acts of councils and papal constitutions—a Bible which, instead of instructing and composing the mind, bewilders it ; instead of giving peace to the heart, disturbs it ; instead of teaching the eternal truths of salvation, establishes and glorifies, nay, deifies, the pope and the hierarchy of the Church of Rome—a Bible that banishes the *true Bible* of God and places itself in its stead. Such is the Roman Catholic Bible which they are compelled to admit, and do actually admit—a Bible which is the most insidious rival of the true Bible ; for, as it has no visible existence in one volume, it is difficult to refer to it by chapter and verse, and therefore is less assailable ; but, nevertheless, it is itself a powerful assailant under the shelter of what is called the living voice of the Church.

From what has been said we conclude that the decrees of the Church are not of a nature to produce conviction, and to settle controversies of faith. Let us now see if the means they employ to enforce submission to these decrees are calculated to effect this end.

The first weapon they use against those who refuse submission is *excommunication*. It is said to be a *spiritual*

sword, but it has terrible *temporal* consequences. They are not content with anathematizing the *doctrine* of the enquirer, but they condemn the *person* himself. As excommunication affects primarily and principally the soul, they should not only possess the power of condemning the soul, but also have a knowledge of the state of the conscience of the person against whom the excommunication is fulminated; for it would be unjust to inflict so terrible a punishment on one whose conscience is clear. Now, God alone has the power to save and to condemn; He alone is the awful judge of consciences; He alone is the searcher of hearts and can know the state of the conscience. Excommunication, in their sense, not only means exclusion from the Church, both externally and internally, but implies also a curse. An excommunicated person is considered as lying under the anathema of their Church and of God; for they believe that God blesses and curses by the mouth of the Church, that is, of the pope and his hierarchy.

Nay, they go so far as to excommunicate and curse even *the dead*, and we could cite several instances of this revengeful proceeding. Most people are aware that Wickliffe was cursed long after his death, that his bones were exhumed and burnt, and the ashes thereof scattered to the four winds of heaven. If their wrath extends even to the dead, what must it be when it is kindled against the living? Where is the tenderness of Mother Church?

Excommunication can have no effect on the soul, for it does not proceed from an authority that has the power and searching eye of God Almighty and Omniscient. But it has, nevertheless, some external and temporal effects greatly to be dreaded. It excludes him who is struck by it from participation in the sacraments and all the other rites and ordinances of the Church. Now, if they really believe that their Church

is the true one, they do not follow the example of the Good Shepherd. They determinedly exclude the excommunicated from the hope of ever returning to their Church by not merely depriving him of the means of grace, but by not even allowing him to enter their places of worship. If he dared to enter, he would be driven out by force, and so long as he remained, the officiating priest could not proceed in the celebration of the mass. Thus he is deprived altogether of the means of becoming convinced of his errors, and of being brought to adopt other views. Nay, more; the "children" of this tender Mother Church are forbidden all intercourse whatsoever of a social or religious nature with the excommunicated. Even the common offices of charity which God has enjoined on all men are prohibited in his behalf. Excommunication has, therefore, a dreadful outward effect on the excommunicated person. By it he becomes an outcast from the society of Roman Catholics. If he be happy enough to form new associations, or to join other bodies of Christians whose views coincide with his own, he need not care. In that case, he will not feel so much the loss of the society and good will of his former friends. But he need not look for such compensation in an exclusively Roman Catholic country. Whoever has the Church for his foe, in a country where she is powerful and influential, must prepare himself for much suffering or else expatriate himself and seek peace elsewhere. Alas! that the love of the Church should lead men to such uncharitable proceedings! But no! it cannot be the love of that fair Church of Christ which is the kingdom of truth; on the contrary, it is the bigotry of sect, and the self-love of the priestly caste within that sect! Would to God Roman Catholics trusted more in the power of the truth, and less in the weapons of carnal warfare!

But can excommunication settle controversies of faith ? By no means. Coercion was never intended by Christ to convince men's minds of the truth, and without this conviction there can be no real settlement of controversies. The dread of excommunication, with all its temporal consequences hanging over one's head, tends to fill the Church of Rome with hypocrites and hidden unbelievers.

We shall consider, in our next lecture, the other coercive weapons of the Church of Rome.

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## LECTURE II.

### *THE COERCIVE POWER OF THE ROMAN CHURCH MILITATES AGAINST HER CLAIM TO INFALLIBILITY.*

ONE of the worst features of episcopal and papal infallibility is the *coercive power* to which Rome lays claim and which she uses with a spirit that can only be characterised as persecuting, in order to extirpate heretics. It makes one shudder to read the history of the revolting and heartless cruelties to which the system of infallibility has given rise. The very record of these cruelties condemns the Church of Rome for ever. One can scarcely believe that they could have been perpetrated under the sacred name of Christianity.

Yet so it is. The evidences that the Church of Rome is possessed by a persecuting spirit are so numerous that we hardly know where to begin. With the facts before us, what other conclusion can we come to—at what other result can we arrive, than that the Church of Rome is thirsty for the blood of heretics? The ground taken by the Church has been that heresy is a crime to be punished with torture and death; that the Church is the judge of what constitutes heresy, and has a right to impose punishments upon all who deny her teachings. She not only claims to exercise control in all spiritual matters, but over mind and body also.

Roman Catholics who are at all conversant with the history of their Church do not deny that at times an undue

and harsh use has been made of the coercive power ; but they attribute this abuse not to the Church, but to the secular instruments employed to carry out her decrees. They maintain that the Church never approved of these excesses of harshness and cruelty. They contend, also, that they were caused rather by the political reasons which secular governments had in view in extirpating heretics, than by any cruel disposition on the part of the Church.

The fact is, the Church claims and has confirmed this claim, by recent papal bulls and encyclicals referred to in the notorious *syllabus* and accepted by the Roman Catholic world, that she has temporal coercive power, and that the State is bound to assist her in executing the decrees of this power. And as she claims also to have control over the State, all the excesses and abuses of the coercive power at which she winks must be laid at her door.

They are radically and fearfully wrong. How can they prove the claim to coercion ? From Scripture ? No. Christ says, " My kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence." But they defend it by arguments drawn from the nature of society. The Church, they say, is a perfect society or kingdom, and as such must be endowed with legislative, judicial and coercive powers. What would be the use of her laws, if she had no power of enforcing them ? She is a visible society, and therefore has not only authority over the souls, but power also over the bodies of men.

It is sad to reflect that any ecclesiastical body should put forth such astounding claims and thus become a terror to all members of the Church. I feel rather inclined to be lenient

than severe on the Church of Rome, but candour compels me to see her in her true light. I have no space to enter into details, but what I assert, both in this and my other lectures, I can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt. The system of infallibility logically leads Rome to be not only the most bigoted, but also the most cruel of Churches. And all this bigotry and cruelty assumes, in her communion, the appearance of godly zeal.

We know that Roman Catholics disavow the cruelties which taint the history of their Church, and emphatically maintain that her present attitude is altogether different. But do they disclaim also the gift of infallibility, the coercive power, and the supreme control over the State, from which all the obnoxious and repulsive traits of their Church flow as the stream from its source ?

They claim that the coercive power is essential to infallibility in order to settle controversies of faith. We maintain, on the contrary, that such a power is rather prejudicial to that end.

When any member is accused of heresy, the Church summons him before her tribunal ; asks him if such or such doctrines are his ; commands him to recant and submit himself, without any discussion and without hearing the proofs of what is considered the truth ; and if he refuses, he is excommunicated and sentenced to undergo due punishment. But the Church herself does not pretend to execute the penal sentence. For this purpose he is handed over to the secular power, called the *secular arm* of the Church, which is compelled to obey her behests and assist her in the extirpation of heretics, under pain of excommunication, interdict, or deposition. In countries where the Church of Rome is predominant, there exists an intimate connection between

Church and State, by virtue of which the State is the *executive power* of the Church. In such countries the State generally looks upon heresy as high treason, and treats the heretic accordingly. Such is the policy of the Church, which enables her to shirk responsibility for such cruelties as the State may employ.

But she is nevertheless accountable for them. Are not the officers of the State her children too? If they are such willing tools as to become the executive power of the Church, can they not also be restrained by her command? Has she no excommunications to fulminate against them for their executive cruelties? Alas, it is the Church herself that dictates the punishment, directs its execution, inspires the officers with cruelty and inflames them with hate and bigotry. And as they act at her instigation and under her influence, she is responsible for all that they do. Church and State frequently corrupt each other, in the Church of Rome, by promoting mutually their own selfish interests.

Now, can a judge of controversies that uses such coercive means settle them *in foro interno*? Can it be possible that the State as the executive power of the Church should effect what the Church herself cannot effect? Christ Himself excluded such means effectually when He declared that His kingdom was not of this world, but within us. Yes, "within us;" it is obvious then that controversies must be settled by internal conviction. Any other way of adjusting them would be contrary to the will of the Great Head of the Church. To determine them by the State, as the secular arm of the Church's coercive power, makes her *ipse facto* a "kingdom of this world." It is not a sign of infallibility but of weakness, not of divine institution, but of human policy and design; not of reliance on God but on the power of man.

Such means, instead of purging the Church of heresy, fill her with hidden heretics and unbelievers. And is not this actually the case? Can you find any body of Christians in which there is so great a number of infidels as in the Roman Catholic Church? They abound most in countries where coercive measures are most frequently resorted to.

But why did secular princes and governments lend their aid to this coercive power? Why did they become the executive power of the Church? Partly because they thought by this means to consolidate their own authority, but principally because they were compelled to obey the commands of the Church on pain of being excommunicated and deposed, or of seeing their countries placed under the ban of the Church, should they dare to disobey. Rome, on account of her supreme authority and infallibility, claims the power of not only excommunicating but also of deposing princes and of punishing whole countries by depriving them of the means of grace. History affords us many instances of the exercise of this power of deposing princes and of absolving their subjects from the oath of allegiance; and Rome has re-asserted, in the recent *syllabus*, nearly all those obnoxious powers which the popes exercised in the middle ages over princes and governments. They are in abeyance at present, but would be employed if opportunity afforded and prudence permitted it. To what extremes will not the claim to infallibility lead?

An upright judge never avoids the light of day, but rather courts publicity. But such is not the case with the pope and his prelates. They have a spy-system and a secret tribunal—the *Inquisition*. For the existence of such a tribunal they require not only the approbation, but also the active co-operation of the secular power. Thanks to humanity and

the weakened condition of the temporal influence of the Papal See, this institution cannot now indulge in its cruel and heartless activity. But at the time when the Church of Rome had spiritual and temporal sway in the courts of Europe, it existed universally wherever she predominated. There was not a city, village, hamlet, or household to which this formidable secret tribunal had not excess by its spies or secret emissaries, and it would again exert its pestilential power, should the papacy ever regain its former influence.

The inquisition is acknowledged to be a practical part of the Roman infallibility-system, and would give signs of its former life, should it appear prudent and feasible. It is admitted by all Roman Catholics that their system is doctrinally exclusive and intolerant ; nay, they glory in this exclusiveness. Now, as there is no religious doctrine which has not its practical import, the Church of Rome, whenever and wherever she has the power, must on account of this doctrinal exclusiveness become also practically a persecuting Church. As a matter of course, practical intolerance cannot exist without a secret tribunal whose object it is to enquire into the faith of the members and judge those who are suspected of heresy.

Now let me ask what kind of men were and would again be the judges of such a tribunal, should the Church of Rome ever obtain sufficient power to coerce in the old way ? Surely, the office is a most odious one. Its exercise demands the extinction of all kindly and charitable feelings, and actual delight in extreme cruelty ; since its objects are to find out and exterminate heresy, to overcome obstinacy by fearful tortures, to subdue heretics by bodily sufferings ; if necessary, to hang, quarter or burn them, and render their names infamous to future generations of Churchmen. In a

word, as the institution is the offspring of bigotry and intolerance, its judges must be the most bigoted and intolerant persons that can be found. Men with humane and Christian feelings would be unfit to fill so odious an office. Judges without guile and devoid of jesuitical cunning could not find out the secret heresy of the soul. Liberal-minded men would scarcely prevail upon heretics to recant. Upright and high-spirited men would consider it beneath them to send forth an army of spies, to employ knaves to act as torturers and to conduct the whole judicial process in secrecy and darkness. Kind-hearted men could not bring themselves to witness the heart-rending tortures of the unfortunate victims. History gives us the character of these inquisitors, and it is by no means flattering.

And who are the criminals to be judged and condemned by this awful tribunal ? Sincere enquirers after truth—men who, rather than recant, suffer willingly, even joyfully, the keenest tortures and the most cruel death as martyrs of the truth ; innocent men and women who have been falsely accused by their enemies ; persons who are obnoxious to the inquisitors themselves, or to some influential worldly Churchman. Whosoever even suspects a person guilty of heresy is bound to accuse him, otherwise he is in danger of being himself prosecuted as an abettor of heresy. This dreadful institution is a firebrand thrown into the midst of a kingdom —through every grade of society. The husband is bound to accuse his wife, and the wife her husband ; the children must inform against their parents, and these against their children ; brothers, sisters, and friends are bound to accuse each other before this tribunal. All sacred ties and connections must be disregarded and torn asunder at the bidding of the Holy Office.

And the manner in which the accused party is judged is most unjust, heartless, and cruel. He does not know who his accusers are, nor is he even told the crime he is charged with, in order that if he should be conscious to himself of having ever said or done anything contrary to the faith with which he is not in fact charged, he may unguardedly disclose that, imagining it to be the very crime of which he stands accused. He is not allowed counsel or defense. Any lawyer who undertook his cause would incur excommunication. Two witnesses are enough in order to convict him; and even the depositions of those whose testimony would not be admitted in other trials, either from personal enmity or public infamy, are received as evidence by this tribunal. The whole aim and object of the judges is to convict the prisoner at all hazards. For this purpose they employ the most subtle and cruel means. Their interrogatory is cunning and captious. The party accused is thrown into a horrid dungeon and tortured in the most exquisite manner, in order to elicit a confession of heresy, and often the unhappy victim, overcome with pain, makes a confession or recantation of an offence of which he is not guilty. Often he succumbs under the cruel tortures, and so dies a martyr to the truth, before sentence is pronounced on him. From the sentence of this tribunal there is no appeal; it is final. The usual sentence was death by fire, thus symbolizing that the heretic deserved the fire of hell.

"No recantation or assurance of orthodoxy could save the accused; he was allowed confession, absolution and communion, and his profession of repentance and change of mind was accepted *in foro sacramenti*, but he was told at the same time that it would not be accepted judicially, and he must die as if he were a relapsed heretic. Lastly, to fill up the

measure, his innocent family was deprived of his property by legal confiscation, half of it passing into the papal treasury, the other half into the hands of the inquisitors. Life only, said Innocent III., was to be left to the sons of unbelievers, and that as an act of mercy. They were therefore made incapable of civil offices and dignities." (*The Pope and the Council*, by Janus, p. 197.)

"The binding force of the laws against heretics lay not in the authority of secular princes, but in the sovereign dominion of life and death over all Christians, claimed by the popes as God's representatives on earth. Every prince or civil magistrate, according to the constant doctrine of the court of Rome, was to be compelled simply to carry out the sentence of the inquisitors, by the following process: first, the magistrates were themselves excommunicated on their refusal, and then all who held intercourse with them. If this was not enough, the city was laid under interdict. If resistance was still prolonged, the officials were deprived of their posts, and when all these means were exhausted, the city was deprived of intercourse with other cities, and its bishop's see removed." (*Ibidem*, p. 195.)

I have not in the least overdrawn the picture which history presents to us of this secret tribunal of the Church of Rome. Any impartial student of the records of the Inquisition will confess that I have drawn it rather lightly. I would rather minimize than maximize the errors of Rome. In fact, I point out only those features of this Church which either constitute her very nature or necessarily follow from her fundamental principles. I wish to describe her not so much as she was but as she is. I omit, therefore, all those enormous details of crime with which her history abounds, and with which our controversial books are often filled.

The office of the Inquisition still exists in the Church, although in a modified form; to it are referred the prohibition of books, and all matters relating to the suppression of heresy. The principle is there; and if time and circumstances permitted, there is every reason to fear that it would show itself in its former hateful character.

Now, is the existence of such a dreadful tribunal a mark of the infallibility of the Church? It is surely a condemnatory mark. A Church that, on principle, coolly and deliberately uses such awful means in order to settle controversies of faith, and to stamp out heresies, cannot possess the divine attribute of infallibility. Will persons who have felt the power of such a tribunal ever become convinced that it defends or promotes the truth? Will they not be forever lost to a Church that creates a hell on earth in order to torture them into subjection? Instead of producing humble and free submission, can the means which Rome employs produce anything but sullen obstinacy?

One of the worst features in the coercive powers of this infallible Church is that she condemns to death those who differ from her from motives of conscience, the secular power being compelled to be the executioner of the Church. Her learned doctors justify the death-penalty inflicted on heretics. Thomas Aquinas, her leading theologian and doctor, who is held in so great esteem that his *Summa Theologica*, together with the Bible, is placed on the table in general councils, where controversies of faith are to be determined, lays down this doctrine (*Summa Theologica*, Sec., quest. xi., art. 3):

“It is much more grievous to corrupt faith, which is the source and life of the soul, than to corrupt money, which only tends to the relief of the body. Hence, if coiners and other malefactors are justly put to death by the secular authority,

much more may heretics not only be excommunicated, but even justly put to death."

I shall not lose time in refuting this monstrous doctrine. I merely remark that the analogy which Thomas Aquinas attempts to draw is of no value ; because in other crimes external acts only have to be proved, while in order to prove that a person is a heretic the conscience must be arraigned. It must be proved that he obstinately resists what is *known to him* as the truth. Does the Church's infallibility extend so far as to search the heart ? How can she know whether he resists her teaching from purely conscientious motives or from malice and obstinacy ? If it be evident to the pope and the bishops that they are infallible, are they justified in supposing that this infallibility dogma must be evident to everybody else ? If a doctrine be believed by them as true, *merely because* they themselves hold it, must it be believed by everybody else for the same reason ?

Roman Catholics themselves teach that the conscience is the immediate rule of our actions, so that, if anybody acts contrary to its dictates, he is guilty of a breach of God's law. Shall a person, then, betray his conscience by submitting himself to an authority whose infallibility he does not perceive, and embrace doctrines in which he cannot conscientiously believe ? The Church of Rome glaringly contradicts her own teaching on the conscience, by commanding absolute submission to her teaching and by condemning even to death anyone who dares refuse such submission. True ; a *doctrine* may be condemned as heretical, but to condemn any *person* as a heretic is an almost impossible thing ; it must be left to the Great Head of the Church who alone is the searcher and judge of hearts. The Church of Rome has too little or haply no confidence in the protection of Christ. If a doctrine

be from God, Christ will nourish it in men's minds, in spite of what pope or bishops may do against it ; it will take root there and bring forth good fruit. If, on the contrary, it be not of God, it will produce bad fruit and cannot permanently exist.

The Church of Rome endeavours to make the Church of Christ a kingdom of this world ; hence she is compelled to use temporal means, even to the penalty of death, in order to sustain her dominion. And as it is impossible to ascertain whether a person be really a heretic, he is condemned merely on suspicion of heresy. Alas ! to what uncharitable consequences their horrid bigotry leads them ! The system of infallibility makes them readily suspect errors and heresies where they do not in fact exist. If, for instance, their stereotyped, antiquated, and unintelligible jargon be not employed by any of their teachers or members, but the doctrine is explained in language that brings it home to the understanding and conscience of the hearer or reader, he is suspected of heresy. They have similar suspicions of those writers and teachers who adapt themselves to the progressive spirit of the age. If any one makes discoveries of important truths unknown to past ages, as Galileo and others did, he is suspected of heresy. They look with the same disfavour upon any one of their members who is liberal in his views and sentiments towards those who differ from his Church, and who, in the spirit of charity, excuses them and regards them as true and sincere Christians. If any one makes light of superstitious rites which the Church herself has not made universal, he is suspected of heresy.

There was a time when the mere suspicion of heresy was a sufficient reason for throwing a person into the dungeons of the Inquisition, and wo to him if he were once confined within

the walls of that dreadful institution. Many a one entered there ; but few ever came out again. Tortures, excommunication, and death were their lot. What was once the case might happen again, if the Church regained her full spiritual and temporal sway ; for these persecutions and cruelties were not pure accidents but were perpetrated on principle. They are the practical outcome of her doctrine that she is an infallible spiritual despot, having supreme supervision and control over the laws of the State, and authority to enlist its aid as the executive branch of her coercive power. True, these horrible doctrines are kept out of sight in mixed communities, but they were and are still, even in our time, carried out in countries where Roman bigotry and exclusiveness have unrestrained power. They have been taught *ex cathedrâ* by a number of popes and accepted by the whole hierarchy ; and they are the legitimate consequence of their doctrine of infallibility in controversies of faith. Infallibility, *in theory*, may sound very sweet to anxious enquirers after truth, but infallibility, *in practice* and sober reality, is truly a monstrous thing.

Have Roman Catholics, therefore, any reason to complain if we look upon their Church with suspicion and distrust ? Are not her awful claims and the records of her past history calculated to fill us with apprehension and dismay ? Can we forget the fearful lessons her annals teach us ? Where in all Christendom has there ever been a Church, whose record is so blood-stained as that of the Church of Rome ? In what Church is bigoted exclusiveness a virtue, and the persecuting spirit a sign of meritorious zeal, save in the Church of Rome ? Oh, men and brethren, would to God, that the Holy Ghost might descend on that Church and remove

the fearful stumbling-block of papal and hierarchical infallibility, building her anew "on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone!"

## LECTURE III.

### *INFALLIBILITY NOT THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.*

ROMAN Catholics boast of the unity of their Church which consists in the blind and absolute subjection of the laity to the clergy, of the clergy to the bishops, and of all to the pope. They teach that this unity is produced by a central principle which cements all the members into one compact body, and that this principle of unity is the infallible authority of the pope and the bishops. Their maxim is, that without infallibility there cannot be unity. Let us consider, in this lecture, this boasted Roman Catholic unity and see what it amounts to in reality.

As we have proved before, the Church of Rome does not bear externally the marks of infallibility ; they themselves admit that this prerogative of the Church has to be proved by a long and intricate process of critical reasoning, of which only their learned divines are capable. Now, we maintain that the *mere authority* of a Church whose claims to infallibility are not *self-evident* is not a means of preserving unity.

We admit that the "*ipse dixit*" of the teacher is a sufficient and convincing argument for pupils whose minds are undeveloped and unaccustomed to think. But when they begin to think and reflect for themselves,

they discover that the teacher is a man like themselves and that truth is not all concentrated in him ; in a word, that he does not show incontrovertible signs of being endowed with inerrancy. Having arrived at that conclusion, they no longer believe everything that he asserts, unless he submits valid arguments for it ; and if they do not see as he sees, they do not think it any harm to differ from him.

It is the same with the teaching of the Church of Rome. Those who are uncultivated and ignorant and have no minds of their own may be easily led by her and induced to swear by the "*ipse dixit*" of the pope and his bishops, as undeveloped pupils are led by the mere authority of their teacher.

Hence the invariable policy of this body, wherever they have full sway, consists in keeping the people in ignorance. Never was the papacy higher and firmer on its throne than in the middle ages, when all the learning was confined to the priesthood, and the people were steeped in the grossest ignorance. Nowhere is Rome more predominant now than in countries where popular education lies prostrate. Nay, in Roman Catholic times and in purely Roman Catholic countries the education of the masses is a thing unheard of and discouraged in every possible way. Show me a Roman Catholic country where popular instruction is promoted. You cannot ; it would militate against their infallibility-system. Whatever feeble efforts they have made in modern times towards educating the masses have been forced upon them by the onward march of that Protestant civilization which lies round about them.

It would appear that by faith they must understand a pious credulity which takes for granted everything that their clergy tell them. Surely, true faith is enlighten-

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ment, pre-supposes and produces enlightenment. Hence Christ came into the world when the Roman empire with its high Greek civilization had sufficiently prepared mankind to receive the enlightened faith of Christianity. This could not have been effected in the midst of ignorance ; for ignorance is the mother of credulity and superstition.

Whenever the Church of Rome is unable to stem the current of modern progress and to resist any longer the demand for public schools, she cannot avoid following suit and reluctantly yields to the inevitable, in order to maintain her own ; but she is not content unless she has the youth under her immediate direction and control, so that she may prescribe the quantity and quality of teaching to be administered. Again and again have the Roman pontiffs issued decrees against all popular education not controlled by the priesthood. Again and again have they solemnly declared that the civil power has no authority whatever to establish public schools, to interfere with the discipline or the arrangement of studies, and to examine and license the teachers. Again and again have they threatened with the censures of the Church those parents who, contrary to the will of their priests, dare to send their children to public schools established by the State. I need refer you only to the recent *syllabus* where these assumptions are promulgated to the whole world. We all know with what bitter animosity the Roman Catholic school question is discussed and fought over in all countries where the State, intent to rescue the masses from the gulf of ignorance and degradation, establishes a feasible and practical system of popular education.

It is not love for the masses that prompts the hierarchs to yield to the clamour for popular education ; nor is it a disinterested and unalloyed love of the truth which produces

their agitation for *separate schools*, wherever they cannot obtain the entire control of the educational system ; but they are afraid that they may lose their hold on the minds and consciences of their people, if they allow their children to be educated in any other than the infallibility-groove, and to have their minds and characters formed in an atmosphere where the impartial truth, and not the all-overshadowing doctrine of Church-infallibility, forms the chief element. They must be taught to view everything with the eyes of the Roman hierarchy ; they must be kept in ignorance of certain truths, especially in history, the knowledge of which would alienate them from the Church. They might become too wise, become imbued with what Protestants call the spirit of impartial enquiry and liberty of conscience, and swear no longer by the "*ipse dixit*" of the Church. Nay, they are apprehensive that even the intercourse of their children with those of their Protestant neighbours may weaken and imperceptibly eradicate their docile faith in the tenets of the Roman Church. Hence they must be kept removed as far as possible from contaminating contact with Protestant children. In a word, they are trained to move and live in a world of their own.

It is admitted by all who have enquired into the matter, that the secular education imparted in Roman Catholic separate schools is inferior to that given in the public schools. Hence they are unable to compete with Protestants in educational efficiency. Their lay teachers are generally of inferior attainments, since as a rule they are not so well paid as their professional brethren in the public schools. Wherever possible, both for economical and other reasons, they employ nuns or monks who are altogether ignorant of the acquirements suitable for their pupils in practical life,

and in their combat with, and advancement in the world. What a pity that the pope and the bishops should thus deprive their innocent and confiding people of so many temporal advantages, merely in order that they may be enabled to maintain their own supremacy over them ?

But they say it is a love of religious education and training that induces them to establish separate schools. We answer that we know, both from experience and observation, that the children receive precious little of this religious training, even of the Roman stamp, in these schools. How seldom do the priests themselves visit them and teach therein. The fact is, they have either no time or are indifferent to the religious instruction of the children. And the teachers, are they able ? and how much religious instruction do they actually impart ? So far as religious knowledge is concerned, Roman Catholic day and Sunday schools compare unfavourably with Protestant religious training, imperfect as we confess that to be in its present state.

Why, then, this great ado amongst Roman Catholics about having the control of popular education ? For no other reason but to keep the rising generation within the pale of their Church. Mere external authority is their principle of unity ; therefore the people must be kept in a state of mental bondage.

Those members of the Church of Rome who become enlightened by education adhere only in a very loose way to the principle of authority. They admit the creeds and decisions of the hierarchy, because their enquiries have led them to believe that the doctrines are founded on *other* reasons than the mere authority of the Church. You hear the enlightened Roman Catholic sometimes express himself as being a "*Catholic from principle*," or a "*Catholic from conviction*,"

by which he means to say that he believes the doctrines of his Church, not merely because the Church holds and teaches them, but because he thinks that he has other proofs which convince him of their truth. He would believe the same doctrines, although the episcopal body had not defined them. It is, therefore, not the principle of mere authority which keeps him within the Church. This is, so far as the enlightened member is concerned, an unnecessary principle of unity. Whatever therefore Roman Catholics may say to the contrary, ecclesiastical infallibility is not necessary for the unity of faith.

But there are other members, who when they become enlightened, perceive not only that the Church has no external marks giving her a claim to infallibility, but that she has actually erred, and that her religious professions prove her to be fallible. Mere authority has never been sufficient to keep such men in the unity of the faith.

To escape this danger the Church of Rome has always jealously striven to bring all higher education and the teaching of the universities also under her control. She cannot possibly hinder the education of the higher and wealthier classes, but she must have it under her direction, so that she may impress on the minds of the students such principles only as will admit of no hostile developments against herself. The professors, teaching in these higher institutions of learning, are required to take an oath that they will not teach anything that will in the least degree be injurious to the Church's authority; it is insisted that such views should be inculcated as will set it on a plausible basis. All the sciences are required to be subordinated to the teaching of the infallible Church. They have a kind of metaphysics that dovetails in with their theology. A free and untrammelled exercise of

their reasoning powers and of sound common sense would soon lead the proficients in higher learning to the conclusion that they ought not to be credulous any longer. But it generally happens that they are kept in the Church, not indeed by mere authority, but misguided by deceptive philosophical formulas from which they make logical deductions in favour of the tenets of the Church and thus think that they are "*Catholics on principle.*"

We may, therefore, safely conclude that it is not the supposed infallible authority of the hierarchy which keeps its members in the unity of the faith.

Again, we contend that, if ecclesiastical infallibility were necessary for the unity of faith, it should have the power of preventing disunion. In every institution, the provisions for preventing disruption are of great importance and manifest a great deal of wisdom and forethought. Now, in the Church of Rome, this very claim to infallibility seems to be a cause of disunion. This will appear evident if you reflect that it makes the Church stationary and unyielding. She is bound, on account of this claim, to hold and to maintain for ever what she has once decreed and defined in matters of faith and morals; and, as a matter of course, this conservatism has given her the habit of being stiff and inelastic also in disciplinary and merely accidental or secondary points.

Humanity, on the other hand, is always marching onward. The Church sees in this progressive spirit of society nothing but evil. She tries hard to keep it back by putting a tight rein on it and tying it down. Instead of placing herself at the head of true progress and directing it in the right channel, she is continually found in antagonism to it, trying to destroy it, or at least to check it as much as possible. Hence, pro-

gressive humanity, led by the God of History, instead of remaining with her, tears itself adrift from her ; and it would be well with it, if it followed Christ's religion contained in His inspired Word, which allows free development and sanctions true progress. It would appear that it was not so much opposition to doctrinal and dogmatical points which was the primary occasion of severing whole nations from the Roman communion ; but they were compelled to emancipate themselves from the control of the hierarchy on account of its hatred of social progress, of its retarding spirit and dull obscurantism. The Church of Rome, while pretending to be peculiarly adapted to the exigencies of human nature, fails to recognize one of its essential elements, blindly ignoring the signs of the times. A Church that does not know how to judge and estimate the progressive movements of society, and how to take her part in leading them to a fruitful issue, cannot possibly preserve the unity of Christendom. Now and then society will be in the van and ahead of her in progressive knowledge and aspiration. It cannot then be driven back ; the Church is left behind, and a separation will be the inevitable result. The student of history will find that this obscurantism of the hierarchy was the real cause of the great religious movement of the sixteenth century, by which Rome lost the half of Europe. The West of Europe, by its contact with Greeks and Arabs in the East, had acquired new ideas which fermented in society and opened new avenues of progress. Rome did not understand this spirit, and therefore, could not direct it. God, in His all-wise guidance, drew the nations towards the source of all true progress—the Bible. Society, with the Bible in hand for its guide, need have no fear of being driven back, but may advance with safety as much as it likes.

A body of ecclesiastical rulers and dignitaries claiming infallibility, filled with too high notions of their position, connected by no endearing ties with the common interests of their fellow-men, and keeping themselves aloof and separate from society in order to attract and maintain a certain superior and mystical respect, in a word, a priestly caste, which in reality constitutes the Church of Rome, cannot possibly understand the wants of society and be the promoter of great social movements, because it is too tenaciously conservative of the old state of things. In placing itself at the head of progress and wishing it God speed, it would be in danger of surrendering or imperiling its infallibility.\* It is evident that a body that does not understand the signs of the times, although it may loudly claim infallibility, cannot preserve the unity of its flock, but must needs drive away many of its best sons, and with them whole multitudes of others.

What took place in the sixteenth century and at other times is the case in our own day. Why those agitations in all Roman Catholic countries? Why that conflict we are witnessing everywhere between the Roman Catholic laity and clergy, between Church and State? Because the pope and his bishops are endeavouring to pull back the car of social progress. Pius IX. has solemnly condemned all the principles of modern civilization and declared that he can never be reconciled to them. Every existing constitution in Europe, with the exception of the Russian, is an outgrowth of this modern civilization; Rome is in antagonism with it. She considers modern constitutionalism, liberty of conscience, religious toleration, free speech, a free press, popular education, the equality of all before the law, and all the other liberties which form the basis of our social machinery as so many

damnable errors. No ; Rome does not understand the nature and aspirations of our modern social life, and therefore she has already lost the affections of many, and however unwilling nations may be to change their religion, she constrains them, by her obstinate and obscurantist policy, to oppose her and finally to separate themselves from her. They cannot but perceive that a Church which is constantly attempting to check the current of their social progress cannot be the Church of Christ. Therefore the Roman hierarchy cannot be that infallible body which is adapted to keep the nations together in religious unity.

This will appear still more evident if we reflect that their system of infallibility is so cumbersome that disruption cannot be prevented for any length time. Formerly, before the Vatican council, infallibility was believed to reside in the voice, not of one bishop alone, nor of a number of bishops, but of the whole episcopal body. The consequence was that the remedy of an infallible decision could not be applied before the disease had advanced too far. How could it be possible to secure in time the infallible voice of the collective episcopal body ? Before it could be heard, a complete and permanent disunion had already taken place. When a controversy of faith arose in any country, the bishops of that country generally met and condemned those who differed from them, but their definition and condemnation could not definitively settle the controversy, or restore unity, because infallibility was wanting. Both parties, therefore, claimed a right to their opinions. The case was brought before the pope ; but his infallibility was not an article of faith. To be cautious, therefore, and to use every human means in order not to commit himself was his best policy. He prudently took time for consideration, watching and waiting to see

what turn events would take. The controversy, in the meantime, was allowed to rage on from year to year, until the controverted doctrine had been completely established and taken root in a body that separated from the Church, and it was too late to repair the mischief. Yet it was not until then that the pope issued his Bull of condemnation and excommunication. But to what purpose? As he had not yet been declared personally infallible, it was not only too late, but had no infallible authority even then. The question, therefore, remained still undetermined, even for Roman Catholics themselves. The pope had nothing for it but either to write to all the bishops in order to ascertain the universal faith of the Church, or else to summon a general council. Both methods of ascertaining the faith of the episcopal body were troublesome, slow and expensive and could only come to an end long after complete disunion had taken place, and when a recall to the one fold was of no avail. Thus the council of Trent was held long after Protestantism had become a deep-rooted fact. Therefore the system of infallibility has never been a practical means in the Church of Rome of preventing in a rational and effective manner disagreement on matters of faith.

And it is difficult to see how the Vatican decree declaring the personal infallibility of the pope will mend matters. There is now complete centralization, all settlements of disputed questions depending on the official utterances of an old man. We fail to perceive how he can bring controversies within the Church to a speedier issue, having now the whole weight of the burden and its awful responsibility on his own shoulders. How can he, overwhelmed by the multiplicity of his other cares, settle controversies of faith, in all parts of the world, in time to prevent disruption? This very centralization of

infallibility is an inevitable cause of further misunderstanding and delay.

There is another strong reason why the system of Church-infallibility is powerless to preserve the unity of faith. The principle of union should be *active* and promote the inner life of man. Men cannot be united in faith which is *the life* of the soul, unless the principle of unity in faith promotes this subjective vitality. We see clearly that the Bible and the Spirit of God possess this inherent potency. Hence whatever external differences may be found in evangelical Christendom, there is energy and activity there, not resulting in disunion, properly so called, but in displaying the vital unity of faith which stirs within them. It is not thus with the Church of Rome. There is no life in their unity; all is stagnation in the slough of ecclesiastical infallibility. Individual effort in matters of faith is out of place in their system, since no man dares to think for himself. It is the hierarchy which decides for all in general, and for every one in particular, for the layman as well as the clergyman, the individual bishop as well as the priest. Now, if they be let alone for a length of time, *i. e.*, supposing there be no disturbance of their peace for a long period, as happened in the middle ages; the result will be unbroken slumber—deathly lethargy in matters of faith. The salvation of each individual is in the hands of others; he has no need to trouble himself about it. His whole inner life remains in a state of torpor, so far as spirituality is concerned. In this stagnant state of a religious community every vice must soon take root and flourish; the seeds of corruption and decay will speedily ripen and mature at the expense of the soil by which they have been fed. Thus in the middle ages all were resting in undisturbed repose, on the ecclesiastical infallibility of the Church of Rome. It was

then that ignorance and vice predominated, and the germs of disunion soon began to develop themselves and bring forth fruit. It was then that several anti-popes claimed the papal chair, each of whom had numerous followers. It was then that the great schism existed in the Church for two generations, which was put an end to by the council of Constance. The Church had become so corrupt that even the bishops themselves acknowledged the necessity of a reformation both in the head and members of the Church. And this reformation could not be brought about, even in the sixteenth century, except by direct revolt from the infallibility system. Thus Rome lost millions of adherents whom, if her infallibility doctrine were of practical utility, she should have kept in the unity of faith.

All this leads us to the conclusion that, if there is a measure of unity in the Church of Rome, it is not the system of hierarchical infallibility that secures it. We do not deny that true Christians among them are united in the bond of faith *by the truths of the Bible*; but this is not the unity which is distinctively claimed for the Church of Rome. There are other external and human reasons which give to that Church the semblance of unity she manifests to the world, but I cannot enter fully here into those reasons. On the one hand, it is the *esprit de corps* and the powerful *self-interest* of the higher clergy which unite them in a well-organized phalanx; and on the other, it is the influence which the bishops know but too well how to exercise over the people which keeps the latter within the pale of the Church and cemented together by clerical domination and sacramental superstition.

But, after all, there is not that unity in the Church of Rome of which they boast so much when they argue against

Protestants ; on the contrary there are many divisions among them. In the first place, they have more than one form of worship. There are different rites in their Church, such as the Latin, Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Maronite, Syriac, Greek Melchitic, Chaldaean, Ethiopian, Ruthenian, Bulgaric, &c. In fact, the members of every Eastern nation that has re-united with Rome possess their own liturgy. The most widely-spread rite is the Latin, which has also its peculiar differences as between the various nations in which it prevails. But there are not only variations of rites, but also of discipline in the Churches denominated after the different rites. Protestants cannot differ more widely in discipline and form of worship than Roman Catholics do. Now, we do not blame the Church of Rome for these differences ; we rather praise her for allowing them. What we desire is that they should not reproach us with our liturgical and disciplinary controversies. It is not these that constitute the divisions of Protestantism, but the spirit of jealousy and exclusiveness that some of us have inherited from Rome, and which seems to be an ingredient of corrupt human nature. We regret to have to admit that there exists a Protestant popery often as virulent and intolerant as the Roman papacy, and whatever division and uncharitableness there is among us arises from this cursed popery of our own nature.

Yet after all, I believe that there is as much, if not more, hatred and disunion amongst the various rites of the Roman Catholic Church, than there is between the different Protestant denominations. In the Church of Rome, those who are born in one rite are not allowed to become members of the Church of another rite, or even to participate in its ministrations. Thus a member of the Latin Church is not permitted

to join any of the Eastern rites, or to take holy orders therein, and *vice versa*. It is, moreover, a known fact that the Christians of one rite do not regard favourably those of another rite ; they look upon one another as being in error, or as verging upon heresy, if not actually heretics. The union of the Eastern rites with the pope, the patriarch of the Latin rite, is very slight, and on the least provocation, they would break off communion with him. He has to act very warily with them, tolerating many things that he would punish with the heaviest penalties in the Latin Church. His authority over them is rather nominal than real, and there appears to be a looser unity there than among us Protestants. Even if we confine our observations to the Latin Churches alone, as principally known to us, we find as many religious jealousies and animosities among them as among the different Protestant Churches. We know that there is not much love lost, on this continent at any rate, between the Irish, French, and German Roman Catholics. But we shall not enter into their quarrels. Of course, the divisions arising from national jealousies and animosities do not destroy the unity of faith, and ours amount to nothing more than theirs. We are both deserving of blame for allowing our corrupt nature to deter us from a closer Christian unity and a more large-hearted charity.

Again, there is not more division in the different Protestant denominations than there exists between the different religious orders and schools of divinity in the Church of Rome. The secular priests have very little regard for the monks and the other regular clergy. The former consider themselves *the* clergy of the Church, and look upon the latter as interlopers in their parishes ; whilst the latter consider themselves more sanctified than the secular priests. If you wish to know

what real exclusiveness and religious intolerance is, you should become acquainted with the monkish orders. They believe that they alone are in the right path of salvation, and are sure that the rest of their Church is in danger of perdition and on the precipice of eternal ruin ; practically, their order is *their* Church, out of which there is no salvation ; all their actions seem to be performed for the glory and extension of their religious institution. The means they use to this end are many ; each order, nay, each monastery, has its own peculiar superstitions by which they endeavour to attract the ignorant crowd and obtain its favour. Each order has its peculiar sanctuaries, its holy shrines to which pilgrimages are performed ; each has its own miraculous images and medals ; each praises its own holy wares, and depreciates those of the rest ; each endeavours to acquire an ascendancy in the vulgar mind. And when one order has acquired an influence superior to the rest, they palm off their peculiar superstitions on the whole Church, which they can easily effect by their emissaries, because they have their ramifications and affiliated houses in all countries. If you offend one member of a religious order, you have all the monks of that order against you. Each order is an *imperium in imperio*. Now, the infallible Church fosters the establishment of religious orders ; she sanctions their exemptions, privileges, peculiarities and superstitions, and thus fosters hatreds and animosities. Here, again, I affirm that there exists more brotherly love and union among the different Protestant denominations than among the religious orders of the Church of Rome.

Roman Catholics boast much, as against Protestants, of their unity in doctrine. Now, we affirm that there are great divisions between their different schools of divinity. In regard to Church-government and the infallibility of the

pope, the Gallican school of theologians was bitterly opposed, before the Vatican council, to the Roman or Ultramontane school. The whole Church was divided into these two schools. The Roman school condemned the Gallican doctrine as *proxima hæresi*, and defended their own as *proxima fidei*; and they succeeded in stamping it out in the Vatican council where the personal infallibility of the pope was declared.

Since that time, the minimizers and maximizers of the meaning of the term *ex cathedrâ* and of *ex cathedrâ* definitions take the place of the former Gallicans and Ultramontanes, and will surely disturb the doctrinal peace and endanger the frail unity of the Church. In regard to grace and predestination, again, there are the schools of the Augustinians, Molinists, and Thomists, which differ widely from each other, and caused, for centuries, the greatest excitement and division in the Church of Rome. At one time the Bull was ready, but never issued, declaring *ex cathedrâ* the Thomist doctrine as *de fide*, and condemning the doctrine of the Molinists or Jesuits. Yet, the papacy afterwards inflicted a severe blow on the Thomist doctrine by condemning the *Augustinus* of Jansenius. There was a time when both parties were so much embittered against each other, that they denounced one another as heretics. The pope had to impose silence on both parties. The Molinists condemned the Thomist doctrine as bordering closely on Calvinism; while the Thomists denounced the doctrine of their opponents as savouring of Pelagianism. These disputes are still in the Church and cause divisions among theologians. Hot disputes exist in regard to moral casuistry. There are the Rigorists, Probabiliorists, Probabilists, and Laxists. There was scarcely a point of practice in which theologians and fathers confessors were agreed, and this must certainly have caused the

greatest perplexity in the consciences of the people. It was then declared by the pope that one may safely follow the works of Alfonso Liguori. But even this decree has not settled the controversies in regard to moral theology. The Laxists *ex professo* have been condemned, but the other schools still exist and attack each other vehemently, so that one father confessor grants absolution where another would absolutely refuse it, because he belongs to a different school.

Notwithstanding the outward doctrinal tranquillity on the surface of the Church of Rome, there is at present an internal fermentation going on in the minds of her intelligent members, which, in course of time, must burst out and set the house on fire. They vaunt their unity, but let them reflect that that unity is brought about by external pressure. They themselves must be conscious that their Church does not enjoy real internal peace and unity. The differences among evangelical Protestants in doctrinal points are not greater than they are among Roman Catholics, and they have therefore nothing to boast of as against Protestants.

## LECTURE IV.

### *PERNICIOUS INFLUENCE OF THE INFALLIBILITY- DOCTRINE ON THE OFFICE OF THE CHURCH AS WITNESS-BEARER.*

THE system of ecclesiastical infallibility exerts, above all, the most pernicious influence on the office of the Church as witness-bearer to the truths which God has revealed to her. It not only distorts and obscures them, but adds to the deposit of faith the traditions of men.

We have seen, in the first part of this course of lectures, in what sense the Church as a living and continuous society bears witness to the revealed truths of God, and reviewed the arguments by which Roman Catholics endeavour to establish the necessity of infallibility for the due performance of this office. Let us now pass from the theory to the reality and see what difficulties they actually encounter in the witness-bearing of their Church.

They teach that their Church is the infallible living witness through an uninterrupted chain of traditional links; that she existed anterior to, and independent of, written documents; that in fact, these have no essential value, since she could bear witness without them. Although the Scriptures and the works of the fathers should perish, the Church would, according to their system, be just as trustworthy a witness without them as she was before with them. A number of difficulties arise here which appear to be insurmountable.

In the first place, in order to be a true traditional witness, the present episcopal body is bound to show its unbroken succession from the Apostles through all succeeding links. They cannot do it; for to prove it by oral tradition would be begging the question.

One demand of the bishops, in whom the gift of infallibility is said to reside, is: Show us your credentials; prove that you are the successors of the Apostles in a continuous chain. They are bound to prove this *Apostolical succession*, and that *with infallibility*. They must prove also that the bishops, and particularly all the popes, who form the grand links in the chain of succession, were baptized and rightly ordained. If one link in the chain be made of a bishop who was not baptized, or not validly ordained, the whole chain must fall to pieces like a rope of sand. They must, moreover, be certain which pope was the rightful bishop of Rome in those times when there were several claimants to the papedom; for if there were a usurper in the papal chair, all his acts, as head of the Church, would be null and void; and it would not be a chain which God has linked together. The truth and legitimacy of this succession should be patent to all men. They have recourse to tradition to prove it; but *do they prove it? Can they prove it?*

They say, it is in the nature of every society to bear testimony of itself, of its origin, constitution and identity. We answer that, in order to prove the identity of a society its history must be known. And you can never acquire this knowledge, especially if the society be of ancient date, by *oral* tradition only; there never existed such an instance. How then will the Church of Rome establish her identity? According to her system, which claims entire independence of *written* documents, as being the *living* witness of the

faith once delivered to the saints, she must require her members to believe that she is the identical Church of Christ, merely because she says so; she must, likewise, require them to believe in her authority merely because she claims to be infallible. In other words, she must be infallible because she is the living witness; and she is the living witness because she knows this with infallibility. Where is here their boasted logic?

They reply to our reasoning that their theory of the Church being a living witness by means of traditional links *does not* exclude *written* documents; but, on the contrary, that she admits them, and renders them authoritative by her testimony, and that these same documents, taken as mere historical evidence, serve conclusively to prove her identity. They invite us to compare their Church in her present state with the Bible, in order to recognize her identity with the Apostolical Church; to compare her teachings with the writings of the fathers and other ecclesiastical authors, in order that we may see her continued and uninterrupted identity in all ages, both internally and externally.

It is evident that in thus reasoning they contradict their system. For, if all the doctrines had to be written down, so as to establish the identity of the Church, what is the use of oral tradition at all? The Church, in that case, can only teach that which is written down, otherwise the members cannot be certain that what she teaches is true. If, by written documents only, whether of human or divine authority, it matters not—we can and must know whether the bishops, either separately or as a body, teach true doctrine, then *all* that has to be taught must have been written down by *the founders of the Church*. Every subsequent written document must contain nothing more than is contained in

Scripture; otherwise they could not prove by it the identity of the Church. Hence, Roman Catholics, being compelled to admit that by written documents only the identity of their Church as a true witness of divine revelation can be satisfactorily proved, must admit also that the only doctrines of Christianity to be taught and preached since the times of the Apostles must be contained in sacred Scripture, and that all doctrines not contained therein cannot, with any show of reason, be held and believed as doctrines of Christ, but must be considered as so many innovations. Here, then, however reluctantly, they are constrained to come back to the Protestant principle—the Bible alone as the only rule of faith.

The Roman Catholic system is contrary to the nature of things; hence they themselves constantly contradict it. If their independence of the Bible and other written documents were reliable, why did they write the doctrines down? Why do they constantly appeal *only* to written documents when they wish to prove any of their tenets? Does this not show conclusively that the *depositum* of faith can only be preserved by the certain and safe means of written documents, and not in the vague and uncertain channel of the oral witness-bearing of the Church?

When the Church of Rome gives a dogmatic definition or decree about any doctrinal point, she does not pretend to establish a *new* doctrine, but merely declares that such and such a doctrine is contained in the *depositum* she has received from Christ. And this *depositum* they believe to be the written and unwritten Word of God. The unwritten word, too, has been written down, and is contained in the fathers and other ecclesiastical writers. The *depositum*, therefore, in which the living authority declares a doctrine to be contained, is contained in written documents. Hence,

by tradition we have to understand, not the oral *living* traditional links, but the representative ecclesiastical writers of every age.

Moreover, Roman Catholics teach that the Church, in drawing from this *depositum* is *not inspired*, but *assisted* by the Holy Ghost. Assistance presupposes that the ordinary means are employed of finding out the truth. Of course, without such employment there would be no assistance. It is to be supposed that these means lie within the reach of possibility, and that their use is not a superhuman task.

The Roman Catholic bishops, therefore, before they can *expect* the assistance of the Holy Ghost, must *first* and *foremost* act the part of theologians. They must *thoroughly* study the deposit of faith. Now are we sure that they do so before giving a decree or definition? History and experience suggest that bishops are not always the most learned and industrious of men. We cannot say that, in many cases, favouritism has had no share or influence in their appointment; nor are intrigues altogether out of the question. We think that aptitude for government is generally considered a more suitable qualification for the bishopric than theological learning and acquirements. It would appear that inquisitive men and profound scholars are seldom raised to the episcopal dignity; on the contrary, it is men, from whose disposition to enquire nothing has to be feared, who are usually elevated to that responsible position. It has also to be considered that the bishops, instead of studying theology, have quite enough to occupy them in attending to the government of their dioceses; and not a few of them love the *otium cum dignitate*.

The fact is that the episcopal body, before giving a dogmatic decision, before saying *placet*, never prosecutes a

thorough study of the question. Now, how can they, according to their own theory, expect the assistance of the Holy Ghost, if they do not work? Does assistance not, it may be added, involve the supposition of work? In all general councils, the time is too limited for a searching investigation and discussion of questions.

Whence it follows that the decrees of general councils and the unanimous belief of the *ecclesia dispersa* can only teach us what the episcopal body for the time being holds and believes; but they render us, by no means, certain that their decrees and decisions are consistent with the *depositum* of faith. *Practically*, then, they take for granted that the present living traditional link holds exactly the doctrines which every one of the preceding links held up to the time of the Apostles. Theoretically, they hold that a thorough examination is required of the written documents containing the Church's doctrines; that only then may they expect the assistance of the Holy Ghost; and that, after a mature study of these documents, with the help of God's Spirit, they are able to render the members of the Church infallibly certain that such and such a doctrine is contained in Scripture or in the *totum* of the representative ecclesiastical writers—the fathers and doctors of the Church. Is there not a palpable contradiction here between theory and practice?

They reply that each bishop has his trustworthy and learned divines who study, in his stead, the difficult points of controverted questions and give him their well-matured decision; that each council, too, employs the most eminent theologians that are to be found in the Church, who are well versed in sacred Scripture and in the whole range of written tradition; and that these make a thorough study of the points in dispute and enlighten the bishops.

Here we have another contradiction of their system in its practical working. To the labours of the bishops, not to the study of their theologians, was promised the assistance of the Holy Ghost. It depends on the decision of the bishops whether it shall be received as a dogma that such and such a doctrine is contained in the *depositum* of faith. If the bishops, after the labours and conclusions of their theologians, declare that it is taught in Scripture and tradition, they appear to give this decision, because they believe in the results of the study of their divines. And if they do not wish to have a blind belief in the labours of their fallible inferiors, they must make a careful revision and examination of them. How can they do this without the knowledge, for themselves and by themselves, of the contents of sacred Scripture and the whole range of tradition so far, at least, as regards the particular points in question? Thus, while they think and maintain that their decisions in regard to controverted points are based on and contained in the deposit of faith, they are, in reality, based on the studies of fallible men, not even belonging to the teaching body—of men who have no vote in the Church.

And let me ask, who are these theologians whom the bishops employ as their assistants and guides? They may be learned and well-meaning men, yet they are determined *not to discuss* the doctrines which the episcopal body at present holds, but to take them as true and to *defend* them at any cost. This is the basis of their trustworthiness, and of the reliance the bishops place in them; they are men who view things in an undisguised party spirit and are ~~waterly~~ destitute of impartiality. As it is impossible for them to study the doctrine in question through the whole range of sacred Scripture and tradition, they one-sidedly search for those

passages and texts which seem to favour their thesis. Party spirit will twist and turn anything to its advantage, and it is astonishing how far it can venture in this direction.

What is the process by which the Church draws the precious treasure of divine revelation from tradition—the mine of antiquity—and imparts it to her hungry children, even without their seeking it? Do all her priests read and understand all the holy fathers, the decrees of councils, &c., &c.? Not one in a thousand has ever read, in the originals, half a dozen of the fathers. How could they do it? A great amount of criticism is required to distinguish the genuine and true from the false and erroneous. Is it not a well-known fact that persons who are always *on the defensive* and are never allowed *seriously* to discuss existing doctrines are very bad critics? Do men who repose quietly on the pillow of *present* tranquillity care much to be disturbed by enquiries into the teaching of the *past*?

Even if the bishops and theologians had the desire to arrive at judicial conclusions from the study of written tradition, they could not do it; it would be a *superhuman* task. Tradition comprises so many writings of fathers and doctors, acts of councils both general and particular, and other documents, that it is utterly impossible for any man even to read them with an ordinary degree of attention and care.

The difficulty of understanding them is still greater. It requires a knowledge of the original languages, Oriental, Latin, and Greek. And this knowledge must not be a superficial one; it requires a critical acquaintance with all the changes a language undergoes when transferred from one class of objects to another, and in passing from one generation to

another, from one country to another, from being a living to becoming a dead language. Thus, classical Latin and Greek are vastly different from ecclesiastical Latin and Greek. So African Latin differs from that spoken in Italy, and this again from French, or Spanish, or German Latin. The Latin of the Roman empire is different from the Latin of the middle ages ; the Latin of the fathers differs from the Latin of the schoolmen. The same changes must be considered in reference to the Oriental and Greek languages.

The difficulty increases, if you take into consideration that all these writers have their peculiar philosophical views. A thorough knowledge, therefore, of these is an essential requisite for rightly understanding and duly appreciating their *dicta*. The nature, also, of the doctrines they refuted, the circumstances of times, places, and persons, must all be properly and thoroughly appraised.

Who does not see that it is utterly impossible for any ordinary human being, during the short period of his mortal life, and the very few years in which his understanding is sufficiently matured for such a task, to acquire an adequate knowledge of all this ? An impartial thinker must, therefore, come to the conclusion that a serious and reflecting Roman Catholic can never arrive at the point when he is able to give a sufficient reason of the hope that is within him —a reason that would be in conformity with his system. Hence it is no secret that members of that Church, notwithstanding all their glorying and boasting about tradition, fathers, and councils, have as little reverence for them as for the Scriptures themselves and that *the infallible Church is all in all*.

But let us suppose that they could acquire a correct and sufficient knowledge of the fathers and other branches of tradition, what would they have gained ? Would they be certain

even in that case, of having obtained the truth? Are they sure that the fathers are competent witnesses? According to the Roman system, each father, individually, is fallible. His testimony, therefore, has only human authority, and is subject to all the rules of criticism to which other historians must submit.

Suppose and take for granted that the fathers had no wilful intention to relate falsehoods and that they were veracious and impartial, as champions of the faith ought to be; let us enquire how far they are competent. Were they as a matter of fact able to know more than we know of the oral teachings of the Apostles? We admit that those who heard the Apostles were competent; but they are very few in number. We have only fragments of their writings, and so far as they are genuine, they contain nothing in addition to what is contained in Scripture. They are not available, therefore, to establish distinctive Roman Catholic doctrines based on the oral teaching of the Apostles. They are not available to settle controversies between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Those fathers whose testimony is chiefly employed by Roman Catholic divines in establishing their distinctive dogmas lived from one to four and even six hundred years later than the Apostles whose oral teaching they are supposed to report. But they were removed by generations from the Apostolic age, and of course, could have no personal knowledge of what the Apostles preached, except by their writings.

They reply that a personal knowledge is not required, that it is sufficient if they relate to us what claimed universal or catholic consent during their times. This, of course, they do. Now, what received universal assent in ages so near the Apostolical times is more satisfactorily gathered from the Apostles

themselves. *Directly*, then, they bear testimony to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, during their times, and *indirectly* to the teaching of the Apostles.

We answer that we can scarcely suppose that each father knew what all the Christian churches held and believed, and not knowing this, he cannot be a witness for the Catholic doctrine. Intercommunication between the different Churches in those times was exceedingly difficult. They were not times of peace, but of convulsion. The Roman empire was crumbling to pieces, and Barbarians were invading it from the North, East, and South. As the art of printing had not yet been discovered, writings were comparatively scarce. How then could these fathers know the universal consent of all Churches? If they expressly tell us, sometimes, that such and such a doctrine is held by all Churches, may they not have been deceived? The limits of their catholicity are sometimes very narrow. Thus the African fathers say that a doctrine is catholic, if they find it in Africa and on the opposite shores of Italy, the Oriental fathers hold a doctrine to be catholic, if they find it in the East, &c., &c. For these reasons it appears very doubtful whether one branch of the Church knew what the other branches held. How much more doubtful, then, must it appear that the individuals, whose writings have come down to us, knew exactly what the whole universal Church held as *Apostolical* doctrines?

But let us concede that every branch of the Church knew what all the other Churches believed and practised, and that the testimony of the fathers proves a universal consent in faith and practice; this would give us nothing more than a *probability* that the doctrines and usages they report came from the Apostles; for we know that the seeds of error were very early scattered amongst the professors of Christianity.

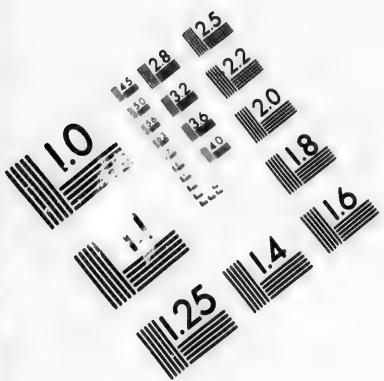
Uninspired men, although professing a holy life, half-converted philosophers, worldly-minded Christians, engrafted errors very early upon the Christian vine. The testimony of these witnesses, then, either in relation to what the Apostles preached, or as to what the universal Church believed and practised, is not an adequate test of truth—the witnesses not being competent to know the truth of what they attest.

In the next place, their testimony is not precise and clear. If you consider the scope of their writings, they are often made to say what they never meant. Isolated passages may be cited to prove anything ; texts which are quoted to establish Roman Catholic doctrines are often most obscure, and sometimes incomprehensible ; meanings are sometimes given to words which they never were intended to convey. Now, a testimony which is not simple, precise, clear and indisputable, cannot be relied upon. Of this nature are the greater part of the texts from the early fathers quoted by Roman Catholic theologians.

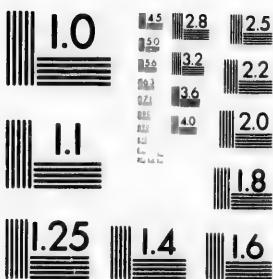
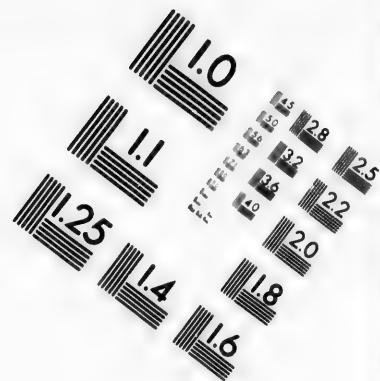
Doubt, again, arises with regard to the matter deposited, when witnesses of equal competency and credibility clash with each other. How often does the testimony of one father contradict that of another. How often do contemporary fathers disagree with each other in regard to the universal consent to which they appeal. There were violent contentions in the Church during the centuries in which these fathers lived ; all appealed to the universal consent ; all thought they had this universal consent in their favour. Whose testimony shall we accept ? Shall we believe the testimony of one father in preference to another, while this other is equally competent ? Shall we believe the testimony of those whom the Church of Rome has dignified as fathers, in preference to their opponents ?

But the doubt in regard to the truth of their testimony is still further increased, if we consider that one and the same father may contradict his own testimony in his own writings. There are many instances where this is the case ; is then any part of the testimony of such a witness reliable ?

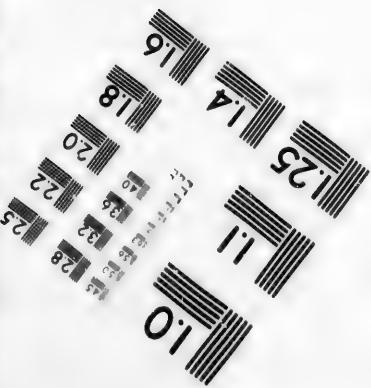
Let us give due honor and credit to the fathers. But their writings can only have value for us in so far as they are based on the writings of the Apostles and are contained therein. When they are made to be witnesses of the *oral* teachings of the Apostles which are not contained in sacred Scripture, they are valueless. Each one taken separately is a fallible witness ; how then can their united testimony be infallible, even if we could secure it ?



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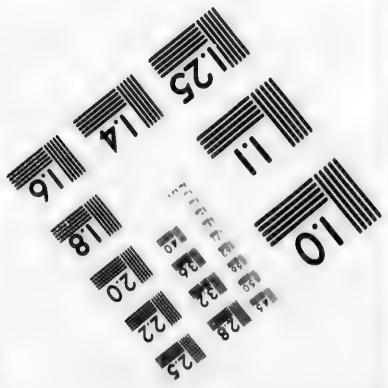


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## LECTURE V.

### *THE DOCTRINE OF DEVELOPMENT A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF THE INFALLIBILITY-THEORY.*

WE saw in our last lecture that the Church of Rome is not the infallible witness of the revealed truths of Christ, because of the impossibility of applying her famous rule—*quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus creditum est*, to her decrees and definitions. This application would involve the vast labour of seeking and finding the dogmas she defines and issues, in the history and traditions of the Church, from the days of the Apostles, through all succeeding generations. As they themselves see the difficulty of the task, they have practically given it up; and, for the most part, do not even attempt it. They have thrown off the burden of proving their distinctive tenets by arguments drawn from the *depositum* of faith which they pretend to guard, as too heavy for their shoulders, and content themselves with leaning altogether on the infallible authority of their Church.

But in order to show the reasonableness of their belief in the present teaching of their Church they have betaken themselves to the doctrine of *development* or *dogmatic evolution*. They compare the Word of God to a seed. As the seed contains within itself the tree with its branches, flowers, and fruit, so also God's Word, originally simple, hidden, and mysterious, comprises within itself the manifold

teaching of the infallible Church throughout all ages. Besides the *explicit* belief and teaching of the Church in each traditional link, they admit that there are also a whole body of *implicit* doctrines which require to be developed by the Spirit of God guiding the Church and leading her into all truth. In a word, they teach that the faith, primitively implicit, must become explicit ; that it must not be supposed that the truth is incapable of progression, or that the teaching of the Church must remain stationary and stereotyped.

They imagine that this doctrine of development wonderfully assists them in defending the doctrines defined by their Church, in every age. Everything in nature and society, in the sciences and arts, proclaims the doctrine of development ; why should the Church, in her faith and practice, be exempt from this universal law of evolution ? They pity us poor Protestants as obscurantists and retrograding malcontents because we go back to the Old Bible and refuse to make any progress in our dogmatic teaching. They tell us that the Reformation not only stopped the car of progress, but drove it back to the primitive times of Christianity. By this doctrine of development they hope to eliminate the difficulties of their dogmatic teaching and to cover deficiencies in their arguments. No doubt, it pleases and attracts their members and retains many within the bosom of the Church.

The learned Dr. Newman has written a very profound and philosophical book on the doctrine of development, in its manifold relations. It is much esteemed by Roman divines and forms part of their standard theological literature. I read it, many years ago, and regret that I have not a copy at hand for present quotation. I must content myself with the remarks on development he makes in his "*Reply to Mr. Gladstone's Expostulation.*" He says (p. 70) :

"For myself, I would simply confess that no doctrine of the Church can be rigorously proved by historical evidence ; but at the same time that no doctrine can be simply disproved by it ; historical evidence reaches a certain way, more or less, towards a proof of the Catholic doctrines—often nearly the whole way ; sometimes it goes only so far as to point in their direction ; sometimes there is only an absence of evidence for a conclusion contrary to them ; nay, sometimes there is an apparent leaning of the evidence to a contrary conclusion, which has to be explained : in all cases there is a margin left for the exercise of faith in the word of the Church. He who believes the dogmas of the Church only because he has reasoned them out of History, is scarcely a Catholic. It is the Church's use of History in which the Catholic believes ; and he uses other informants also, Scripture, tradition, the ecclesiastical sense, or *φρονημα* and a subtle ratiocinative power, which in its origin is a divine gift. There is nothing of bondage or 'renunciation of mental freedom,' in this view, any more than in the converts of the Apostles believing what the Apostles might preach to them or teach them out of Scripture."

"What has been said of History in relation to the formal definitions of the Church applies also to the exercise of ratiocination. Our logical powers, too, being a gift from God, may claim to have their information respected ; and Protestants sometimes accuse our theologians, for instance, the mediæval school men, of having used them in divine matters a little too freely. But it has ever been our teaching and our protest, that, as there are doctrines which lie beyond the direct evidence of history, so there are doctrines which transcend the discoveries of reason ; and, after all, whether they are more or less recommended to us by the one infor-

mant or the other, in all cases the immediate motive in the mind of a Catholic for his reception of them is, not that they are proved to him by reason or by history, but because Revelation has declared them by means of that high ecclesiastical *magisterium* which is their legitimate exponent."

"What has been said also applies to those other truths, with which ratiocination has more to do than history, which are sometimes developments of Christian doctrine—truths which are not upon the surface of the Apostolic *depositum*, that is, the legacy of Revelation,—but which from time to time are brought into form by theologians, and sometimes have been proposed to the faithful, by the Church, as direct objects of faith. No Catholic would hold that they ought to be logically deduced in their fulness and exactness from the belief of the first centuries, but only this, that on the assumption of the infallibility of the Church (which will overcome every objection except a contradiction in thought) there is nothing greatly to try the reason in such difficulties as occur in reconciling those evolved doctrines with the teaching of the ancient fathers; such development being evidently the new form, explanation, transformation, or carrying out of what in substance was held from the first, what the Apostles said, but have not recorded in writing, or would necessarily have said under our circumstances, or if they had been asked, or in view of certain uprisings of error, and in that sense really portions of the legacy of truth, of which the Church, in all her members, but especially in her hierarchy, is the divinely appointed trustee."

"Such an evolution of doctrine has been, as I would maintain, a law of the Church's teaching from the earliest times, and in nothing is her title of '*semper eadem*' more remarkably illustrated than in the correspondence of her ancient

and modern exhibition of it. As to the ecclesiastical acts of 1854 and 1870, I think, with Mr. Gladstone, that the principle of doctrinal development, and that of authority, have never, in the proceedings of the Church, been so freely and largely used as in the definitions then promulgated to the faithful; but I deny that at either time the testimony of history was repudiated or perverted. The utmost that can be fairly said by an opponent against the theological decisions of those years is, that antecedently to the event it might appear that there were no sufficient historical grounds in behalf of either of them—I do not mean for a personal belief in either—but for the purpose of converting a doctrine long existing in the Church into a dogma, and making it a portion of the Catholic creed. This adverse anticipation was proved to be a mistake by the fact of the definition being made."

I have quoted this long passage both because it shows to us how far the Church's *infallible magisterium* extends and demands the assent of the faithful, as also because it gives us some insight into the Roman doctrine of dogmatic evolution. Plausible as this doctrine may appear at first sight, we confess that there seems no reason that should induce us to embrace it.

In the first place it *pre-supposes* the infallibility of the Church otherwise how could men be required, under pain of damnation, to give their assent to these developed dogmas if the Church that evolves and decrees them as articles of faith be not endowed with infallibility? On the other hand again, we are told that the doctrine of ecclesiastical, especially papal, infallibility is a *result* of this dogmatic development. Is there not here a palpable contradiction? As the doctrine of infallibility does not possess *prima facie* evidence, how, in the name of truth, can men ever acquire a convincing cer-

tainty that the Church and the pope are infallible? We have seen that the ordinary *depositum*, namely, Scripture and tradition, do not prove it, and now we are informed that development, the supplement of this *depositum*, does not prove, but postulate it.

Again, this system of development contradicts their rule of faith. They teach that the Church can decree and define nothing but what is contained in Scripture and tradition. Consequently no additions can be made, nor may any previous dogma be amplified; the definitions and decrees must *not exceed* the *depositum* of Scripture and tradition. But what do we see? The doctrine of development is invoked in justification of those very dogmas which we look upon as additions, amplifications, and excesses. Is implicit faith synonymous with *additional* or *amplified* faith?

Hence also this development system is a contradiction of their famous rule of catholicity, *quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus creditum est*. For, what is not *expressed* in Scripture or tradition, what is not known, nor even dreamt of, cannot be *believed*. Belief supposes knowledge. Let them not say that it was *implicitly* known, consequently *implicitly* believed. The rule speaks of a belief that is manifested, and only as such can it become a *criterion of faith*. How can the implicit faith of past ages be a rule for any one by which he may be enabled to find out the Catholic faith? Besides, how can additions and amplifications come within the category of this rule?

Discarding thus the ancient Catholic rule of faith, this theory of development has become the source of multiplying dogmas *ad infinitum*. We find that for the last few centuries they have based nearly all the dogmatic definitions they allowed themselves to make upon this transition from the

implicit to the explicit faith. They have dispensed with enquiry into the documents of antiquity in order to justify their innovations. The opinions of some old theologians which enter into the frame-work of their ideas are eagerly seized upon and considered as germs of the implicit faith. These they nurse and work out until they are dovetailed into their whole system, and exert their influence on the religious life of the Church. And when the development has reached this point, it is approved by the pope and the bishops, and proclaimed to the world as a new dogma of explicit faith.

We must bear in mind that the progress of development does not go on throughout the whole body of the Church, but only in the priesthood; the laity have no part in it; and even among the priests only the *scholae theologorum* are the working bees. They exert an immense influence on the whole doctrinal system; in a certain sense they are the soul of the teaching body. They wield the weapons of defense, make researches into the opinions of the fathers and doctors of the Church, formulate and systematize the whole body of Roman doctrine. They have a domain of their own into which only the initiated may advance and progress; their nomenclature, phraseology and language cannot be understood by any but themselves.

Hence a twofold phenomenon presents itself in the Roman Catholic Church which greatly astonishes outsiders. The first is, that the belief and practice of the masses often differ considerably from the views of their divines and school men. No wonder; there is a gulf between them. Hence the attacks of Protestants on *popular* Romanism are looked upon by Roman Catholic theologians and the champions of their faith as so many calumnies against their Church, so many wicked manifestations of Protestant ignorance and bigotry.

On this account the Protestant labours under great disadvantages when he enters into the field against this Church. If he attacks the Romanism which presents itself to him, and which he daily perceives living in the masses, they tell him that he fights a phantom of his own creation, and degrades himself by slandering their Church. If he criticises and refutes their doctrines as contained in the creeds, definitions, and decrees of councils and popes, they cry out that he does not understand them, that he does not know even the first rudiments of the phraseology, language, and method of the *scholæ theologorum*, which alone contain the key to their right understanding. And if he attacks the teaching the *scholæ*, they will inform him that he shoots beyond the mark, that the teaching of the *scholæ* is not exactly the Church's *magisterium*, that if he wants to attack the Church, he must go to creeds and councils. In fact, the Church of Rome is too slippery for an honest Protestant.

The second phenomenon is, that the Roman Catholic laity live in blissful ignorance of what is going on in the *scholæ*, and of what new dogmas are in process of development and definition by the pope and the bishops. They may awake some fine morning with a new dogma saddled on their patient consciences, which they are commanded to believe under pain of excommunication and damnation. How often during his life-time may the honest layman be required to abandon cherished opinions for new dogmatic definitions added to his former creed. Twice in our times, within the short period of sixteen years, has he been obliged to exercise his faith by receiving new dogmas, first, that of the immaculate conception, and shortly after, that of papal infallibility.

As the working of this system of development is exclusively in the hands of the priests, it is but natural to expect that

such doctrines are principally developed which favour their caste. It was by this method of procedure that the doctrine of a sacrificing priesthood, with its many kindred dogmas, was developed ; in a similar manner the papacy had its rise and took firm root in Western Christendom.

From what we have said it must not be inferred that we are altogether opposed to development ; nay, we admit it, but in a far different sense from that of the Roman system. I cannot explain better my meaning than in the words of the learned Abbé Michaud, the great champion of old Catholicism, in an article in the *Hartford Churchman* (vol. xxxi., No. 16) :—

“ It is evident that this pretended transition from the implicit to the explicit faith is nothing else but the complete confusion of theology and of the faith, to the detriment of the latter especially. This Romish theory is false and it resembles in no respect the notion of progress in the faith, such as St. Vincent of Lerins explained it according to the doctrine received in the East and West, before the great separation of the ninth century. It is to this ancient and really catholic notion of the true development that we must return. In our work entitled : ‘ *How the Roman Church is no longer the Catholic Church*,’ we have explained at length, and (we believe) as clearly as possible, what Vincent of Lerins’ idea was. The Church, at that epoch, did not yet know the famous theory of the transition from the implicit to the explicit. It admitted no progress in the *objective* faith by a material addition to the revealed verities ; it only admitted the progress in the *subjective* faith, by progress in the subjective knowledge of the dogmas. Assuredly, this progress in the subjective knowledge of the dogmas placed them in a greater light, and in this regard there was also progress in the objective faith. But, evidently, this progress

in the objective faith was neither a material alteration nor a numerical amplification of the truths revealed by Jesus Christ and preserved in the Universal Church ; this progress consisted only in this, that the understanding became more enlightened, and thus comprehended better the breadth and depth of these truths. It had nothing to do with adding one or several propositions to the written catalogue of the truths of the faith ; it was concerned only with shedding a fuller and stronger light in the souls of the faithful, a light leaving the truths of the faith absolutely the same, neither changing nor increasing at all, but rendering them more visible by an augmentation of individual light. It had nothing to do with seeing the revealed truths more numerous than in the past ; the question was merely to see them better enlightened and more radiant."

"Understood in this sense, we admit dogmatic development, as our fathers of the first centuries did. This development, which differs essentially from the Romish theory, is not at all dangerous, because it is founded upon religious and philosophical truth. While leaving to each one the fullest liberty in the territory of theology, it prevents arbitrariness in the faith, which always remains what it is, as a deposit which one can neither diminish nor augment, but which one can always irradiate by means of the sun of science, so as continually to see better what it contains."

"Therefore, just as the false dogmatic development is based upon the confusion of the faith and theology, so the true dogmatic development is based upon their distinction and upon the impossibility of transforming the latter into the former. With the first, bad theology becomes likewise bad faith, and we see it only too much in the Roman Church, where the true faith is as rare as true theology. With the

second, bad theology is only bad theology ; it can hold the true faith in external obscurity, but it cannot destroy or corrupt it intrinsically. The essences of things are always preserved on both sides, in this sense. The true faith always remains the true faith, even when it is badly explained theologically."

We agree with Abbé Michaud's views, in general ; we observe only that we have no need of the rule of St. Vincent of Lerins, in order to find out the Catholic faith. We can find no other rule of true catholicity than the Bible alone. To this standard let us apply the theory of *subjective* development, so beautifully explained by the learned Old Catholic Abbé.

## LECTURE VI.

### *SACERDOTALISM: ITS CONNECTION WITH THE INFALLIBILITY-SYSTEM.*

**T**HREE is a doctrine pervading the Church of Rome which is the source of the system of Church-infallibility and papal authority ; a doctrine enslaving the laity and destroying their rights ; a doctrine poisoning the current of all spiritual life ; a doctrine leading to superstition, and even to idolatry : in a word, a doctrine disturbing the purity of the gospel and undermining the simple structure of Christianity. This doctrine is not peculiar to the Church of Rome ; it existed before the great schism between the East and West, in the ninth century ; all the Eastern Churches are corrupted by it, and alas ! we find even Protestant ministers professing to teach the pure gospel of Christ tainted with it. But although others, besides Rome, hold this baneful doctrine, in the Roman Church alone has it obtained its full development and finally culminated in hierarchical and even papal infallibility.

I mean sacerdotalism or priestism—the doctrine that the Christian ministry is a real priesthood. What does this imply ?

In the first place, the idea of *mediatorship* between God and man underlies all the offices of the priesthood. The priest not only teaches with authority from on high, but also acts for and on behalf of the people, in order to obtain for them God's mercy and favour. The Roman Catholic priest is believed to stand between the people and God. And if

we tell them that there is but "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," they agree that Christ is the only true and invisible mediator, but they add that the Church, as a visible body, requires visible mediators, and that her priests fill this office inasmuch as they personify Christ—*agunt personam Christi*—act in His stead and as His visible vice-gerents. And if we demand proof of these assertions, they have nothing to give us save obscure tradition and the teaching of their infallible Church.

If we ask them, again, in what sense their priests are mediators, they inform us that their principal mediatorial function is to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, that is, of the Body and Blood of Christ, both for the living and the dead. If we express our astonishment at such a doctrine, by observing that we find in Scripture that Christ offered Himself *only once*, and that "by *one oblation* He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" that this sacrifice cannot be *repeated* and that Christ Himself was the High Priest,—they evade and obscure the plain teaching of Scripture by subtle answers and distinctions that are above the understanding of the people, and are therefore not calculated to remove erroneous impressions from the mind.

They answer: True, Christ offered Himself only once, but that was in a *bloody* manner; He is offered on our altars as an *unbloody* sacrifice—*sacrificium incruentum*—His sacrifice is not repeated. He does not often suffer nor often die on the altars, but He *continues* there to offer to His eternal Father the sufferings and death He once underwent on the cross. His very presence on our altars is a continual sacrifice here on earth, as His sitting on the right hand of God is a continual sacrifice in Heaven. Nor is there really any other priest but Christ Himself, for the earthly minister is priest

in so far only as he *represents* Christ and acts in His person and name as His visible vice-gerent on earth.

It would seem that Roman Catholics do not understand the real nature of a sacrifice. Scripture teaches that it consists not so much in offering anything material to God, but in obedience, which results in self-denial and self-surrender and in divesting ourselves of anything that is dear to us, even life itself, for God's sake and for His honour. Hence we are taught that Christ's sacrifice consisted in His obedience, the highest act of which was His complete self-surrender, which resulted in giving His life and shedding His blood for His brethren, the fallen sons of Adam. And because His obedience culminated in the shedding of His blood, it obtained for us remission of sins; for "*without shedding of blood is no remission.*" (Heb. ix., 22.)

Hence the Roman Catholic distinction between the bloody and unbloody manner in which Christ is offered, not only betrays their too material conception of His sacrifice, but ignores also the scriptural teaching that without shedding of blood there can be no propitiatory sacrifice.

Nor can they extricate themselves from this difficulty by saying that their mass has reference to the shedding of blood on the cross. How so? By being a memorial of the death of Christ? But a memorial is a memorial, and merely as such does not possess the nature of a propitiatory sacrifice.

They assert that it has reference to Calvary because it is the *same* victim that is *present* on the altars and continues to offer Himself. We deny that the same victim is present, but shall not enter here into a discussion on the real presence. To admit such a doctrine would be interpreting Scripture literally with a vengeance; it would be a palpable transgression of the rules of exegesis and a contradiction of the

fundamental principles of our reason. It is remarkable that while mediæval and modern councils decree the doctrine of the real presence, and the sacrifice of the mass, we do not find these two most objectionable doctrines in the canon of the mass, which is of ancient origin. This canon may be called the mass itself, and is daily used by thousands of priests, and may be conscientiously used as a communion service by Protestants who believe neither in the real presence nor in the sacrifice of the mass.

Where do Roman Catholics find that Christ *continues* to offer Himself on the altars? Nowhere in Scripture. How could He continue His sacrifice on the cross? Was it not an act? And is not an act that is accomplished a thing of the *past*? The *results* of the sacrifice continue, but the sacrifice itself was finished once and for ever.

Besides, was it not a most painful act? And do not pain and suffering, or at least, self-denial in some shape or other constitute the very nature of every sacrifice? However, therefore, Roman Catholics may abstract the idea of blood from the sacrifice of the mass, can it possibly remain a sacrifice, if they dissociate from it the notion of suffering also? Does Christ still suffer and undergo the self-denial and self-surrender of sacrifice? If not, how can He be a sacrifice? The mere presence of the glorified Christ could never make the mass a *real* and *actual* sacrifice.

How, again, can they maintain that Christ alone is the real and only priest of the mass, if they teach that their ministers, too, are its real and true priests? Are there two priests in this sacrifice, Christ and the earthly priest? And if the earthly priests are many in number, must not there be many unbloody sacrifices, too, of one and the same Christ, in many places, at one and the same time? Where do they

learn in Scripture that their priest *acts in the person of Christ* and as His visible vice-gerent? How can Christ be the priest, when the Church assigns all the *active agency* in the offering of this sacrifice to the officiating priest, for the missal asserts that the *intention of the priest* is indispensably necessary to the consummation of this sacrifice of the mass, and thus makes Christ a mere *passive instrument* of salvation, the efficacy of which depends on the caprice, whim, or intention of a fallible priest?

As there is no other sacrifice but that of Christ under the Christian dispensation, the sacred writers of the New Testament have taken especial care never to apply even once the name of *iēpēv* or sacrificing priest to the apostles or ministers of Christ. We have in Eph. iv., 11, an enumeration of the various offices of the Christian ministry, but the name *iēpēv* is not given to any order of men, nor the offering of sacrifice mentioned as any part of the duty of a Christian minister.

In the third place, the office of the priesthood, in the Roman system, is essentially connected with their theory of the sacraments. "No priest, no sacrament," seems to be their general rule. And as the Church of Rome is sacramentarian, *par excellence*, this connection with the sacraments gives the priesthood an immense power and influence over the laity. She teaches that a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us and ordained by Christ as a means whereby we receive the same and as a pledge to assure us thereof; that this outward sign has efficacy in itself, and if rightly administered produces grace—*ex opere operato*.

The entire religious life of Roman Catholics is interwoven with the sacraments. They are met by them whithersoever

they turn. Sacraments accompany them from the cradle to the grave. They have seven of them. Soon after they are born, the water of baptism cleanses them from original sin, and regenerates them. When they arrive at the years of discretion, and lose their baptismal innocence by actual sin, and whenever in after-life they transgress God's commandments, they are forgiven by auricular confession and priestly absolution. When they set out on the journey of life, they are taught to receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of the bishop's hands in the sacrament of confirmation. They are exhorted to receive frequently the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the altar; and they believe that the priest by the words of consecration calls Christ down from Heaven and changes bread and wine into His body and blood. They not only receive it as a sacrament, but also worship it as their God and Saviour; they keep it in the tabernacle of their altar for perpetual adoration, offer to it the homage of incense, have lights burning before it day and night, carry it about in procession, and enclosing it in a costly repository, impart it with their benediction to the people. When they are sick, the priest administers to them the sacrament of extreme unction, whereby they believe they obtain forgiveness of their sins, and help and patience in their bodily sickness. They receive also a sacrament when they enter the state of matrimony, or are ordained to the ministry of their Church.

\* Besides these seven sacraments, they have an endless variety of other sacred things. There is, indeed, no part of the Church's life, in its amazing variety, which is not blessed and consecrated by the priesthood in some external rite or ceremony. In fact, they believe that, as since Adam's fall every created object lies under the curse of God, the priest

has the power of removing this curse by exorcisms, and of imparting to it a blessing for the good of men. These rites and ceremonies, exorcisms and blessings, consecrations and dedications, processions and pilgrimages, holy places and shrines, relics and miraculous images, religious observances of every description, scapulars, holy cords, rosaries, &c., &c., have accumulated in the Church beyond enumeration. And to every one of these things a peculiar efficacy is ascribed by the priesthood and devoutly believed in by the laity.

What does all this mean? It means sacerdotalism or priesthood. History teaches that, if once the Christian ministry is given an altar with power to sacrifice thereon the Crucified Victim of Golgotha, they will make that fictitious altar and illusory power the centre of sacramentarianism.

Read Roman Catholic treatises on the sacraments, and you will find that all their sacraments finally centre in this figment of an altar. And if you once admit sacramentarianism, there will be no end to the number of minor religious observances, to which men will ascribe a certain material efficacy in the spiritual life of the soul. All these things are connected with each other, as a matter of course.

But further still: Sacerdotalism cannot possibly exist without a high degree of *ritualism*. Around that fictitious altar and its supposed victim are gathered all the affections of the priesthood. In that sacrificial Church the Godhead is believed to dwell *bdily*, and on that account the sacred edifice should surpass, if possible, even the temple of Solomon in splendour and glory. Before that altar priests and people must bow and prostrate themselves, for there they believe that the Lamb of God dwells, who was slain for the sins of the world. Nothing should be considered too precious to adorn that altar and tabernacle, in order to remind the people of

the presence of the Lord. Lights should be lit, and incense burnt, and symbolic ceremonies performed. It should be sensibly felt by devout members, and appear manifest even to the occasional or careless observer, that here indeed the deep mysteries of the Christian Church are celebrated. They should be mysteries indeed ; not all that is going on in the great sacrifice should be seen by the people : let the priest turn his back to them. The solemn words of mysterious efficacy, by which he consecrates and offers in sacrifice the body and blood of Christ, let him whisper in an inaudible voice ; and when the mysterious act is performed, let him elevate the host, in order that the people may bow down and adore.

And should the priest alone—the actor in this mysterious performance, by whose powerful words the great change is effected, and the miracle of miracles performed, the observed of all observers—should he, I say, remain alone unadorned, in that beautiful church, and before that splendid altar ? Should the cloud of incense be his only sacrificial garment ? Impossible ! Consequently he will take good care that the gorgeous splendour of his sacerdotal robes surpasses even that of the high priest in Solomon's temple. And why should it not ? What comparison is there between him and the Jewish high priest ? Is he not the priest of a more perfect dispensation—even of the New Covenant ? Is not his victim, Christ himself, infinitely higher than bulls and goats ?

And as the Jewish high priest was surrounded in his sacrificial acts by his assistant priests and Levites, why should the Christian priest be without his deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, lectors, thurifers, exorcists, and other sacred clerics ? And why should not these officers, too, according to their respective dignities, be arrayed in splendid apparel ? And should

not all these vestments, both of pontiff, priest, and assistants be selected with taste, and have a symbolical significance? And as monotony wearies, they should vary them according to the different seasons, festivals, and other sacred occasions.

How glaringly human nature manifests itself within the sanctuary! Dress is a powerful agent. It exercises an insinuating influence both on the wearer and beholder. The tasty, neat, and gorgeous apparel gives pleasure to the priest, and diffuses a feeling of satisfied importance through his soul. And the attendant worshippers, what of them? They, too, feel pleased; they look upon their priest attired in his gorgeous sacrificial vestments as a superior being; the sacred act of the priest surrounded by all the outward splendour of symbolism and art impresses them with a *feeling* of devotion—a feeling, I say, alas! it is nothing more.

Ritualism is not only an essential part of the mass, but it enters also into the administration of all the sacraments and other religious ordinances. Yes, everywhere sacerdotalism is followed by its faithful satellite, ritualism; and, on the other hand, the latter is meaningless without the former. Ritualism, so far as history teaches, is either an outgrowth of sacerdotal pride and vanity, or a means of extending the influence of the priesthood.

We by no means condemn rites and ceremonies promoting order and decency, and manifesting true taste; nor do we despise symbols that speak the truth and make it impressive. But we condemn, in the strongest language, the ritualism that prevails in the Church of Rome and elsewhere, even among some infatuated Protestant brethren. Such ritualism is an error; it is unreal, and symbolizes unrealities. It is a poison that has penetrated the masses of the Roman Church, and *vitiated their spiritual taste*, so that they have lost all

relish for evangelical simplicity and purity. Ritualism, which has become part and parcel of their nature, is one of the principal fetters that keep them in bondage to the priesthood.

I shall not speak here of the other offices and features of sacerdotalism, as they do not come directly within the purpose of these lectures. From what we have seen we have every reason to detest this huge system of unrealities ; but whilst we abhor the system, let us pity those who are ensnared by the seducing delusion, both priests and people, and let us teach them the truth in love. They are born under it, brought up in it from their very infancy ; and, growing up in it, it has become a second nature to them. We do not maintain that sacerdotalism crept into the Church through artifice and design, but rather through ignorance. It is an insidious error that would easily insinuate itself into the sacred ministry and imperceptibly adulterate its Christian character.

The student of Church-history will have learned that it was in the first century only that the Christian ministry retained its pure and simple character. As unavoidable circumstances brought about new phases in the government of the Church, sacerdotalism, with its satellite ritualism, made its appearance also ; and from small and scarcely perceptible beginnings rapidly grew and ripened into a firmly rooted system.

The converts to the Christian religion during the first three centuries, both from Judaism and Paganism, knew no other religious ministrations, prior to entering the Christian Church, except such as were essentially sacerdotal and ritualistic. They brought their taste for sacerdotalism with them into the Church, and it could not be expected that they would entirely discard it.

The state of the Church soon favoured this taste. We find that the Churches were at first independent of each other, but circumstances soon required that they should associate for mutual counsel and assistance. These associations were at first of limited extent, comprising at the most one province; but the *principle of association* having been once introduced, it soon extended its sphere and influence. Churches met in synods, and these sent their delegates to general assemblies. This system of association created new offices, and gave a wider jurisdiction and a larger field of ambition to the Christian ministry. And this we believe was one of the reasons why the clergy of the second century grew less watchful against the inroads of that sacerdotalism for which the Jewish and Gentile converts had an innate taste.

The first seeds of sacerdotalism were sown by the Jewish converts; for, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, it became their settled opinion, in which the rest of the members soon shared, that the Christian Church had to step into the place of the Jewish Church and hold exactly the same position among the nations of the world. Hence the different offices of the Christian ministry were considered equivalent to those of the Jewish temple: the bishop holding the place of the Jewish high priest, the presbyter or elder that of the priest, and the deacon that of the Levite. Thus the door was opened to sacerdotalism; henceforth it grew rapidly; a distance between clergy and people was created which gradually widened, and a hierarchy was planted in the Christian Church.

After these first steps others followed as a matter of course, and others again were taken through the ambition of an aspiring clergy. Not content with merely claiming the titles

of the Jewish priesthood, they demanded also its rights and privileges, such as tithes, first-fruits, distinctive and splendid garments, and other evidences of external grandeur. And as a priesthood cannot exist without a sacrifice, they surrounded the Eucharist with all sacrificial rites and ceremonies and thus corrupted the simple doctrine of the Lord's Supper into a real sacrifice, commemorative of the sacrifice of the cross.

A multitude of ceremonies began to be introduced in the second century, not so much for the purpose of giving importance to the priesthood as to attract both Jews and Gentiles towards the Christian Church, and to refute the calumnies of those Gentiles who regarded the Christians as atheists, because of the simplicity of their worship. The love of symbolism and the symbolic manner of teaching prevalent among the eastern nations was also a fruitful source of rites and ceremonies.

As Christianity progressed, rites and customs in use among the Gentiles, were gradually blended with the Christian worship, and of the penitential discipline much was borrowed from the heathen mysteries, so that Christian ordinances themselves became known by the name of *mysteries*.

If such was the increase of sacerdotalism whilst paganism held sway in the vast Roman empire, we cannot be surprised at its undisputed dominion when Constantine embraced Christianity and gave to it his influence. He and his successors made over the Roman pontificate with its sacerdotalism to the Christian Church. Henceforth sacerdotalism had its own way; the lay element was lost; the priesthood became the Church; the pomp of public worship gave it importance; and its ambition knew no bounds. The arrogance of the bishop of Rome was finally the cause of the schism between the

East and the West. The bishop of the seven hills was acknowledged by western Christendom as its high priest, wearing the Urim and Thummim of supreme priestly authority and jurisdiction. New elements were added to sacerdotalism by this high priest and his faithful allies, the monks. Darkness began to reign in the Church, and the history of Europe became the history of sacerdotalism.

Study the history of Christian sacerdotalism from its beginnings down to our own day, and you cannot help being pained at its unreality and untruth, disgusted with its pretensions, horrified at its excesses, and saddened by the contemplation of its baneful consequences. It presents to us the picture of a spiritual despotism, blighting everything beneath its sway. It has impeded, nay almost destroyed, the fair Christianity of Christ.

Alas ! my heart is overwhelmed with sadness, when I reflect that among my Protestant brethren there are men who in their heart of hearts love sacerdotalism, would rejoice to see it re-established among us and employ their best talents and energies in promoting its growth. It has been planted within our borders ; but it is, as yet, a feeble and sickly plant. How carefully these men nurse it ! They watch over it ; desire to have it left alone ; guard it against rough handling ; protect it from every blast of controversy. And what, in the name of all that is good and Christian, do these dear brethren purpose ? Do they wish to re-establish popery ? By no means. They are conversant with Church history, and know that sacerdotalism is not exclusively Roman, that it prevails in all the eastern churches, and existed in the Church before Romanism was dreamt of. They glory in being *Catholics*, and are determined to hold everything that is Catholic, and they believe in a Christian

sacerdotalism because they think it *is* Catholic. Such is the mildest construction I can put on their sacerdotal aspirations. In all charity, I hope none of them is animated by sacerdotal vanity and ambition; for to such my remarks will prove useless. Does it never strike them that nothing can be truly catholic unless it is contained in the Bible, or can clearly be proved thereby and was held in apostolical times; otherwise the principle, *quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus creditum est* would be inapplicable. Now sacerdotalism is not contained in the apostolical writings, and its seeds were only sown towards the latter part of the second century. It is, therefore, evidently uncatholic. And although it be not exclusively Roman being professed by the greater part of Christendom, let them remember that it produced the papacy and Romanism together with the monstrous doctrine of infallibility and its associate errors.

And if they say that it existed in the Church ever since she had a history, and that it is therefore part and parcel of the *historic* Church, we answer that we also believe in a historic *Church*, and a historic Christianity, but we know also that in the historic Church there are *historic errors*—errors that have played a conspicuous part in the Church's history. Are they to be believed as truths *because* they are historical? Is their being historical a proof of their being catholic also? Is sacerdotalism to be embraced because it has a long and conspicuous history? God forbid.

Let us rather go back to first principles; for they are always catholic. Let us walk in the old paths where we are taught that we have an altar, but that altar is Christ; that we have a sacrifice, but that sacrifice is Christ; that we have a high priest, but that high priest is Christ. Any other altar, sacrifice, or priest can be only fiction and unreality.

## PART III.

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### *THE PAPACY AND INFALLIBILITY.*



## LECTURE I.

### *THE PRIMACY OF PETER.*

THE papacy is the outgrowth of sacerdotalism, and the result of that Roman development which consists in addition and amplification. If you recognize a priesthood, you must have a high priest also. Hence the bishop of Rome, favoured by circumstances, put the coping-stone on the sacerdotal edifice, by laying claim to the highest priestly dignity, and assuming the title of *pontifex maximus*—a familiar dignity in the imperial city and one so highly honoured that the emperors invested themselves with it and performed its offices, in pagan times. When they embraced Christianity, it was conferred on the bishop of the metropolis of the world, who knew but too well how to use it for the development of his high-priesthood and the aggrandizement of his power.

Not only priesthood, but also the system of clerical aristocracy, or, as it is usually called, high-churchism, seems logically to tend to popery, either avowedly or in effect. In making this remark we have no particular Church in view; but we mean the high-churchism manifesting itself in every denomination. It appears to us evident—and experience confirms our opinion—that men of high clerical pretensions feel naturally prone to aim higher and higher, until at last they concentrate the supreme spiritual power in one ecclesiastical dignitary. High churchism is antagonistic to the

rights and privileges of the laity ; how then can men enamoured with it avoid sympathizing with popery which is high-churchism, *par excellence*,—the culminating point of sacerdotalism ? Both sacerdotalists and extreme High Churchmen cannot but admire the ecclesiastical system of Rome as coinciding with their own particular views and aims ; they only hate its abuses and excesses. If Rome gave up her claim to infallibility and submitted to salutary reforms, they would find no difficulty in joining her. Even as it is, with all her glaring errors, many have not hesitated to enter the Roman communion.

Let any one pause and reflect before he regards with favour the system of the papacy. The pretensions of the pope are exorbitant. He claims to have supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the whole Church, exercising immediate episcopal authority in all the dioceses. This authority embraces the power to convoke general synods at his pleasure, to preside over them, and to confirm or veto their decrees and definitions ; to decide controversies of faith and to define doctrines authoritatively, even without consulting the Church ; to enact and establish ecclesiastical laws and canons or to abrogate them at pleasure ; to fulminate excommunications and inflict other ecclesiastical censures, and to relax them by indulgences and pardons ; to void promises, vows, oaths, and legal obligations by dispensation ; to be the fountain of all pastoral jurisdiction and dignity ; to erect, transfer, and abolish episcopal sees ; to appoint, confirm, suspend, or remove bishops ; to exempt colleges, monasteries, or whomsoever he wishes from episcopal jurisdiction and oversight ; to confer dignities and benefices by his sole authority ; to judge all persons in all spiritual causes, finally and irrevocably ; to receive appeals from all ecclesiastical courts, and to reverse

their decisions ; to exact oaths of fealty and obedience from the clergy ; to have supreme supervision over the civil laws of every country, and to forbid the faithful to observe such of them as appear, in his opinion, to conflict with the rights of the Church ; to demand absolute obedience to his will from all members of the Church ; to depose kings and magistrates and absolve subjects from the oath of allegiance. In short, he claims absolute and unlimited authority to regulate everything in the Church, both generally and individually ; he is the source of all law and authority ; and finally, he is the sole judge of the limits of his jurisdiction. He is the absolute monarch of the whole Church, accountable to none but God,—exempt from judgment and liable to no reproof. *He is the Church.* He is believed to be infallible when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*. He is called the *Head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, Our Lord the Pope, Most Holy Father, &c., &c.*

Such an authority has no precedent in human history. Never on earth before has mortal and sinful man put forth universal claims like these to supreme control over the consciences of his fellow-men. We are, therefore, justified in requiring him to show the title-deeds of this overwhelming authority ; for they ought certainly to be clear and indisputable.

They tell us that the pope exercises supreme jurisdiction because he is Bishop of Rome, and as such, successor of St. Peter who received this authority from Christ and bequeathed it to his successors.

The supreme authority of the pope, therefore, presupposes :—

1. That St. Peter had a supremacy of jurisdiction over the Apostles and the whole Church.

2. That this primacy was not personal, but communicable to his successors.
3. That St. Peter was bishop of Rome.
4. That, dying whilst bishop of Rome, he left to his successors in that see for all time to come the supremacy which he had received from the Lord.

Let us briefly consider these suppositions and see if, as papal title-deeds, they are clear and irrefragable.

If one or the other be found unproven, the whole system of the papacy falls to the ground. I take this opportunity of recommending to your careful study Dr. Barrow's excellent "*Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy.*" I believe it to be so complete and thorough that it must convince any impartial reader of the utter untenability of papal claims.

In the first place, then, can it be proved from Scripture that our Lord conferred on St. Peter a supreme power of jurisdiction over the Apostles and the whole Church? As such an authority would be of the highest importance, it should be conferred in the clearest terms and distinctly recognized both by Peter and the other Apostles.

The principal argument which is adduced to warrant and prove the primacy of St. Peter, is drawn from the words addressed by Christ to him, when he, first of all, confessed him to be the Son of the living God: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven." (Matt. xvi., 18.)

Christ employs here the metaphor of a *rock* which may be, and has been, differently interpreted by the most eminent

fathers and biblical scholars—some being of opinion that this rock is Peter, others, that it is Christ, others again, that it is the confession of faith which Peter made. We find none of the ancients strictly interpreting it of the primacy of St. Peter, as understood by the Church of Rome. Why, then, should anyone be obliged, even according to the Roman Catholic rule of interpretation—which requires them to interpret Scripture *in conformity with the universal consent of the fathers*—why should anyone be compelled, I say, to interpret these words in the papal sense, when so many learned and pious men have interpreted them in a different sense? With what reason can they pretend that meaning to be clear, which fathers and doctors did not perceive or even suspect?

Can it be supposed that our Lord would have conferred the title-deeds of such a stupendous inheritance on St. Peter in metaphors which are naturally ambiguous and admit of diverse interpretations? Would not such a proceeding, instead of building up the Church on stable foundations, be like throwing the apple of discord into her precincts for all future generations? Are not those who compel men thus to interpret these words guilty of dividing the Church?

Certainly, the other Apostles and disciples did not understand them in the Roman sense. How is it that St. Mark, the intimate friend of St. Peter, drops them altogether out of his narrative when relating the same conversation? Because the object of that dialogue was to establish the divinity of Christ, not the supremacy of Peter. Would the Apostles, shortly after, have *contended* among themselves (Mark ix., 33-37; x., 35-45) for the chief place, if they had understood these words as conferring supreme authority on St. Peter? Would the sons of Zebedee also, a few days after, have been

so foolish and presumptuous as to beg the chief place in His kingdom if they knew that Christ had promised it already to Peter? Would Peter himself have disputed with the other Apostles about the first position in the Church, if he had understood that Christ, by these words, had promised to make him her head? Would Christ Himself not have explained the metaphor, as he did on other occasions, when He found them disputing among themselves? Would He not have told them plainly, in order to obviate any future misunderstanding, that Peter was to be His vice-gerent? But instead of this, He exhorts them to humility, plainly giving them to understand that He would have no supreme lord and viceroy in His Church.

Metaphors, in general, may be interpreted in different senses, and each interpretation may be correct at the same time, but under different aspects. So here, whether Christ, or Peter, or his confession of faith be meant by the rock, a beautiful meaning is the result, in each case. But we have to do here principally with Peter.

If Peter be meant by the rock, the words *being a rock* cannot mean government, for governing the Church supposes it already built and established. The Church must first exist before she can be governed. Indeed, what similitude is there between a rock and government? At least, there are much fairer explanations of the metaphor than this. Peter may be called a rock because on his faith, his witness-bearing, preaching, holy life, and miraculous actions the Church was built, as it was also on the other Apostles, according to the words of St. Paul, who declares that the Church is "built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." (Ephes. ii., 20.)

If Roman Catholics would interpret Scripture by Scrip-

ture and exclude all special pleading in favour of a supreme jurisdiction conferred on St. Peter, they would clearly perceive that he received no power which was peculiar to him alone, and superior to that bestowed upon the other Apostles. If he was a rock, so were they, for on them, also, the Church was built. If he received the keys, so did they; for they also had the power of binding and loosing. If he had the office of feeding the lambs and sheep, so was it made their duty to feed the flock.

Nor can they gain any special advantage, for the Petrine primacy, by saying that Christ addressed these words to Peter alone. The conversation was a dialogue between Peter and Christ; Peter alone made the confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God; it was, therefore, necessary and proper that to him Christ should address Himself. But as Peter is usually the spokesman of the twelve Apostles, so here we must suppose that he made his glorious confession in the name of all, and that Christ's promise was intended for all.

We must not take this promise out of its connection with Peter's confession. He had been called a rock before, when he was summoned to the Apostleship; nay, the use of the name was equivalent to an Apostolic commission, for upon the Apostles, as upon rocks, the Church was to be built. He is not called, either in this text, or formerly, *the* rock, but *a* rock, one of the rocks—the other Apostles being his fellows. Christ, now, gives the reason why he had received this name, or, in other words, why he had been called to the Apostleship: it was because he confessed his faith in the grand and fundamental truth that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. We may thus paraphrase Christ's words: "Yea, thou art truly a rock, and upon such a rock, upon men of such

faith, I will build my Church. It was on account of thy faith that I called thee a rock and made thee part of its foundation, *i. e.*, an Apostle of my Church ; for so long as it is built upon such a creed, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it." The whole tenor of the dialogue is about the confession of faith in the divinity of Christ ; the rest is merely incidental and gives the reason for Peter's call to the Apostleship. That this faith is the great object Christ had in view may not only be inferred from the concluding words of the discourse where He " charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ," but also from the fact that St. Mark, the companion and friend of St. Peter, omits altogether the subordinate reference to his being a rock. And as the other Apostles had the same faith, they were also rocks, that is, foundations on which Christ built His Church.

Nor can any conclusion in favour of Peter's primacy be drawn from the other metaphor used in this text : " I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." In order to understand the figure, we must bear in mind that oriental keys were dissimilar to ours ; their use required binding and loosing. Hence the following words : " whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven," signified the general use of the keys.

We see here a gradation in the discourse of Christ. In the first part, the Church is to be built on such a rock ; in the second, it is supposed to have been built, and the keys of it are promised to Peter. Now, whatever the keys may mean, whether the faculty of opening the Church by preaching or admitting into it by baptism, or excluding from it by ecclesiastical censures, or any other power, they were given

by Christ to all the Apostle and in the very same words in Matt. xviii., 18. Peter, therefore, in receiving the keys, received no power peculiarly his own, or superior to that of the other apostles. If he, therefore, by the keys, received supreme spiritual power, so did they.

Some Roman Catholics, in their special anxiety to establish Peter's primacy, insist that the words addressed to him are *more general* than those addressed to the other Apostles, and that therefore his power embraces theirs. To Peter he says *quodcunque* (*ο'εα'ν*) *ligaveris*, to the others *quaecunque* (*οσα'εα'ν*) *ligaveritis*—the *quodcunque* is more general than the *quaecunque*. Moreover, they say, the power of the keys was given to the other Apostles unitedly,—*in globo*—they had to be divided, therefore, and to each one the proper sphere of his labours and powers assigned; and by whom should this be done but by Peter?

We answer, that the philological rule that the singular is more general than the plural is new to us. When Christ conferred the power of the keys on all the Apostles together, he, as a matter of course, used the plural—*οσα'εα'ν*—but this *οσα'εα'ν* contains *ο'εα'ν* as many times as there were persons addressed. To us it seems that we ought to reverse the alleged philological rule. Secondly, there was no need of any one who should authoritatively assign to each of the other Apostles a particular sphere for the exercise of their power of the keys. They were Apostles, and as such not confined to any local Church or Churches; they could preach and labour wherever they liked, provided, as St. Paul says, (Rom. xv., 20), “they did not preach the Gospel where Christ was named, lest they should build upon another man's foundation.” Surely, it cannot be maintained that St. Peter could exercise the power of the keys in respect to the

Apostles ; for how could he open the kingdom of Heaven unto those who had long before been admitted into it by our Lord himself ? And if he could not possibly exercise this power in the case of the Apostles, over whom could he use it ?

From the fact that Christ addressed these words *first* to Peter, they argue that he received a superior power. But this, again, is special pleading. Probably, our Lord said first to him, " Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men ; " might it not hence be inferred, by parity of reasoning, that he had a peculiar and personal commission to catch men ?

Again, the endeavour is made to prove the supremacy of St. Peter over the other Apostles from the words addressed to him by Christ, after His resurrection, at the sea of Tiberias, " Feed my lambs ; feed my sheep."

We believe that these words, far from exalting Peter, were calculated to humble, to teach humility, and to renew in him the salutary feeling of a loving repentance. You will perceive the force of this observation, if you reflect that only a few days had elapsed since he had thrice shamefully denied his Lord. On that mournful occasion he had shown that he was not a rock on which the Church could be built. He would almost appear to have forfeited all claim to Apostleship. True, he had repented and obtained forgiveness of his sin ; but might he not, again, trust too much in his presumptuous nature, and relapse ? On that account our Lord seems to have intended to make his call peculiarly impressive to him, so that he might never forget it in after-life. It was, therefore, on that very sea of Tiberias, probably at the very spot where he had first been called and received the title of rock, that our Lord appeared to him, after His resurrection, when he was engaged in his original avocation. Many things had happened since his first call at that very place.

He had denied his Lord ; the rest of the Apostles had not. It behoved him therefore not merely to repent as he had already done, but to give assurances of his love. Hence, Christ asked him thrice " Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these ?" as if to remind him of his threefold denial. He does not call him Peter or rock, but simply Simon, son of Jonas, the name he bore previous to his first call to the Apostleship. And after having been assured thrice of his love, he gives him the commission to feed His flock, and makes him again a rock, *i. e.*, a foundation of His Church. Thus, instead of being a fresh exaltation to a primacy over the other Apostles, this scene by the lake of Tiberias was intended to make his Apostolical call for ever impressive to him. We cannot see how the words of this text can possibly be made the basis of an argument for the primacy. They are *indefinite* ; we cannot therefore, deduce from them a *definite* conclusion. " Feed thou my sheep," does not mean, " Feed thou alone, either personally or by agents, all my sheep." Yet, this meaning they must have, if they are construed so as to indicate Peter's appointment as the supreme shepherd. Did the Apostles need to be fed by Peter ? Were they not immediately taught and guided by God Himself ?

It is evident that these words create no new authority superior to, and distinct from, the Apostleship. Peter here received no new power, different from that which he, together with the other Apostles, had received a little before, when our Lord gave them their Apostolical commission, breathing on them and saying : " As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." This solemn authority included the feeding of the flock and all other powers.

\* Nor could St. Peter's charge be more extensive than that

of the other Apostles ; they all had a *general and unlimited* care of the *whole* flock, according to their capacity and opportunities. None of them was confined to a local bishopric ; the very nature of their Apostleship excluded limits.

These are the principal texts which Roman Catholics adduce for the primacy of St. Peter. But their *special pleading* appears to be inexhaustible. It is astonishing to observe how they twist and turn everything referring to Peter into an argument for his supreme authority. In every incident of his life, in every action performed by him, they fancy they discern some manifestation of his pre-eminence. It betokens the weakness of their case ; but we shall not lose time in following them in their inconclusive argumentation.

We find, indeed, no trace of a primacy in the whole New Testament. If such an office had been instituted, it would have been distinctly mentioned, and a distinct name would have been given it. All the other sacred offices are distinctly enumerated by the inspired writers ; but profound silence reigns in the sacred pages in regard to this sovereign office. If we look for the highest position in the Church, we find everywhere the Apostleship indicated, and nothing higher. The New Testament knows of no ecclesiastical king, no vice-gerent of Christ, no high priest, no visible head over all. On the contrary, Christ repeatedly protests against every kind of ecclesiastical lordship, and that in the strongest terms.

If such an important sovereignty had been instituted, would not Christ have clearly explained its nature, and laid down distinct rules for its guidance, so as to guard against all abuse ? Would He not have inculcated obedience to this spiritual Lord ? Would not the Apostles have exhorted their converts to have recourse to him ? But not a word is

spoken on this important point, in the whole range of the Apostolical writings.

Again, if St. Peter had been appointed sovereign lord of the Church, should we not find signs of his supreme authority in the two epistles he has written? We should, at least, discover a trace of it either in the matter or style of his letters. But there is not the slightest indication of any such authority. "The elders," saith he, "which are among you, I exhort, *who am also an elder* and a witness of the sufferings of Christ," &c., &c. How different this from the style of the letters and bulls of the popes of Rome, his pretended successors! Certainly St. Peter's letters do not savour of popery.

In the Apostolical history, we find nowhere that Peter exercised primatial powers in the Church. In the councils mentioned in the first, sixth, and fifteenth chapters of the Acts, we do not find Peter acting as primate or prince. He is, indeed, prompt to speak, but in no case does the decision appear to rest with him. He never assumed any extraordinary authority. He appears to have had no thought of supremacy, but laboured hard and assiduously like the other Apostles. We nowhere find that he assigned to them their field of labour, confirmed their acts, or appointed bishops and elders in their field.

In all the controversies which then agitated the infant Churches, we never hear of any appeal made to Peter's judgment, or any allegation of it as decisive; and no argument built on his authority. The other Apostles acknowledged no dependence upon him; on the contrary St. Paul "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

Assuredly, the whole New Testament, from the beginning to the end, knows nothing of a "Vicar of Christ."

## LECTURE II.

### *THE POPE'S SUPREMACY CONSIDERED.*

ROMAN Catholics, in order to establish that the pope is the supreme monarch of the Church, must connect him with St. Peter, by proving that he is his successor in the primacy.

The question is, had Peter successors in whatever offices and prerogatives the Lord conferred upon him? It is marvellous that Roman controversialists take the affirmative answer to this important question for granted. They offer not a scintilla of proof.

We maintain that whatever authority he received from Christ was incapable of transfer; that it was merely *personal* and therefore incommunicable to any successors. Roman canon law says:—*Privilegium personale personam sequitur, et cum persona extinguitur*—a personal privilege doth follow the person, and is extinguished with the person. Whatever powers the Lord conferred on St. Peter were grounded on personal merits or graces, or upon personal gifts and endowments; they were characterized by personal adjuncts and fully exercised in his personal acts. It is therefore unreasonable to extend them beyond his person.

The Apostolical office itself, as such, was personal and temporary, and therefore could not be communicated or bequeathed. For it was requisite that an Apostle should be immediately designated and commissioned by God; that he

should be a witness of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. He was a founder of the Church; his commission was universal and indefinite, embracing all nations. In a word, the Apostleship consisted of many privileges and powers which could not be transferred to others, nor did the Apostles ever affect to transfer them.

Now, we have proved, in the preceding lecture, that the powers which St. Peter received from Christ were not distinct from the Apostolical office; they ceased, therefore, with his death. But let us even suppose that Christ conferred on him a primacy of jurisdiction over the other Apostles, this also must have died with them; for when there were no longer Apostles in the Church there could be no prince or head of the Apostles.

But Roman Catholics say that the bishops are the successors of the Apostles. We answer that they were called so by the fathers improperly, and in a broad sense, inasmuch as the episcopal office was contained in that of the Apostleship. But, strictly speaking, they are not successors of the Apostles; for the episcopal office was created by them, and its functions were exercised concurrently during the lives of the Apostles, and in subordination to them. Bellarmine himself, the champion of the papacy, tells us: "There can be no proper succession but in respect of one preceding; but Apostles and bishops were together in the Church." Bishops may be said to derive their authority from the Apostles, not by real succession, but by ordination and appointment. Can magistrates be said to be successors of the king because they exercise some of his powers, and are appointed by him?

If the fathers, therefore, called the bishops successors of the Apostles, they meant that they had received their ordination from some one, either immediately or mediately, whom

some Apostle had ordained bishop. No father ever dreamt that a bishop succeeded to the Apostolical office as such.

Roman Catholics agree with us that the powers of the Apostles were extraordinary and unlimited, and that, in this respect, they have no successors; but they maintain that St. Peter's office was that of an *ordinary* bishop having pastoral charge over the universal Church which they call his diocese, and that as each bishop has successors in his see, so also has St. Peter in his ordinary episcopacy over the whole Church.

We answer that this is altogether a factitious argument—a gratuitous assumption. We find no such distinction either in Scripture or ancient tradition; we are taught there that his charge was as extraordinary as that of the other Apostles, and every conceivable pastoral authority over the whole Church was ascribed to them all by the ancients.

We everywhere find that the laws of succession to the chief magistracy in any realm are considered of the highest importance, and are clearly and distinctly laid down in order to avoid troublesome misunderstandings and dangerous disputes. And are we to suppose that, if Christ had appointed an absolute monarch over His Church, He would not also have given well-defined rules whereby his succession might be determined without shadow of doubt or fear of contradiction? But the fathers of the first centuries know nothing about it, and deep silence prevails in the New Testament touching so important a point. All that Roman Catholics assert in regard to this succession is baseless and fanciful.

We now come to the third step in the papal theory, namely the supposition that Peter was the regular and ordinary bishop of Rome, that is, chief local pastor of that Church. There are several valid reasons for believing the contrary.

Some learned scholars maintain that St. Peter never was at Rome. Their arguments, indeed, are very strong, and we do not see how Roman Catholics can overcome them. But the question here principally relates to Roman bishopric.

In the first place, we maintain that the office of an Apostle and that of an ordinary and regular local bishop are incompatible. Peter, as an Apostle, was commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature, to travel from place to place, to establish Churches, and to appoint bishops and elders; and especially had he the general charge of converting and visiting the Jews dispersed over the whole world (Gal. ii., 8). And we may well believe that he was faithful to his Apostolical duties. With the spirit of a true soldier of the Cross, full of zeal, he carried the glad tidings of salvation to many places, and wheresoever he went the fruits of his Apostleship must have been manifest in the number of zealous Christians and flourishing Churches. We find him now at Antioch, then at Babylon, then at Corinth, anon in Palestine; sometimes, probably, at each of those places to which he directs his Catholic epistles, "the strangers of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." There were millions of Jews dispersed over the provinces of Asia Minor, whom he was specially commissioned to add to the Church. He must have laboured zealously among them. These provinces contained over five hundred towns of considerable size; yet, we gather from his epistles, and from other writers, that he was well acquainted with them, that he preached the Gospel everywhere amongst them, founded Churches and ordained Bishops and elders. In fact, the most flourishing Churches were those of the provinces in which Peter laboured as an Apostle.

Now, how can we reconcile such an Apostolate, and the

zeal Peter displayed in performing its duties, with an *ordinary local bishopric*? How could he be local pastor of Rome without neglecting his Apostolical duties? How could he give special attention to the Roman Church when his Apostleship urged him to spread the Gospel everywhere? How could he combine both offices in himself, since one would have been sufficient to occupy all his care and attention? Would it not have been a lowering of the Apostolical office to become local bishop of Rome? Would such a course not be the same as if a bishop became a deacon? Would his acting as an ordinary bishop not have been much, as if a king, besides his royal duties, filled the office of mayor of a city? Besides, why did he need to be a local bishop, when he, like the other Apostles, exercised episcopal supervision wherever he went? In fact, we find both him and the other Apostles superintending episcopally the local Churches when upon their Apostolic journeys.

If Peter had been Bishop of Rome, in the ordinary sense of the word, he would have violated several wholesome ecclesiastical rules which were in full force from the beginning—or, at least, the reasons for which were always considered valid—and would thus have given a bad example to the whole Church.

One of these rules was that the local bishop should always reside in his district. Peter would constantly have violated it had he been the local bishop of Rome.

Another rule which held good from the beginning was, that a bishop should not desert one Church and transfer himself to another. Peter would have broken it when he transferred his see from Antioch—where they say he was for seven years bishop—to Rome.

Another ancient rule was, that no Church should have two

bishops at the same time. But if Peter was bishop of Rome, this rule would have been disregarded, for the same authority on which his Roman episcopate is built, asserts that St. Paul was also bishop of the same city. The same writers call both bishops of Rome. From this we may infer that both Apostles were bishops of Rome in a large sense, in their Apostolical capacity, but neither of them in a strict and local sense.

We find, again, in ancient writers, that Peter either alone or in conjunction with St. Paul, acted at Rome as he and the other Apostles acted likewise in other places, that is, ordained bishops, by virtue of his Apostolical office. Irenæus says, "the Apostles having founded and reared that Church, delivered the episcopal office into the hands of Linus." (*Irenæus apud Euseb.*, V. 6.) Tertullian says that "St. Peter did ordain Clement." (*Tert. de Praeser.* 32.) Others between Linus and Clement interpose Cletus or Anacletus.

Hence we may infer that Peter never was bishop of Rome, or, on the supposition that he was, he did not continue so. For if he was bishop, he could not well ordain another, either to preside with him, or to succeed him; there would have been two bishops, at the same time, of the same see, which would have been contrary to the invariable practice of the Primitive Church. Or, he laid down his bishopric and did not die bishop of Rome, which would militate against the Roman supposition. Or, he resumed it again before he died, and then what became of Linus, Cletus, and Clement?

To obviate all these difficulties and contradictions in history, we explain those ancient writers who say that Peter was bishop of Rome by conceding that he was bishop of that city, in a general sense, because he founded that Church by preaching the Gospel there, and by ordaining a bishop to preside over it, and because having founded

it he took an Apostolic oversight of its affairs whenever he happened to be in Rome. The other Apostles did the same with regard to those Churches which they founded; yet they were not bishops in a strict and local sense. We conclude, therefore, that St. Peter was never bishop of Rome in the proper signification of that word as understood by the advocates of the papacy.

But let us advance another step. Granting even, for argument's sake, that St. Peter received from Christ a monarchical primacy, not merely personal, but communicable to successors, and that he was ordinary bishop of Rome at his decease, it would not follow even then that his successor in the Roman see would succeed him in the primacy also.

According to the Roman theory, Peter would have held two distinct offices, that of head of the Church and that of local bishop of Rome—the latter, of course, inferior to the former. But according to Roman Catholic theology, these two offices were so closely welded together that succession to the inferior office involved also succession to the higher one. Now, who ever heard of such a rule of succession? It is altogether arbitrary. We can well understand that he who succeeds to a higher authority, succeeds also to those inferior offices which are in some manner connected with it; but the contrary is unintelligible to us.

Such a canon of succession was altogether unknown in Roman civil society, during the first ages of Christianity. We find that in the Roman empire, the emperor was sovereign governor, and at the same time often assumed the office of consul of Rome; yet when he died, the supreme authority did not lapse into the hands of the consul who succeeded him but into the hands of the senate and people.

Now, the fathers adhering to this principle, suppose that

all the authority of St. Peter and of the other Apostles devolved upon the Church and the bishops, the representative body thereof. They teach that the Church, in this manner, received a sovereign spiritual power. In this sense, they affirm that the bishops are the successors of the Apostles, not that any one of them possesses the Apostolical authority in its fulness, but that the whole body is endowed with supreme power in the Church. Dr. Barrow, in different parts of his admirable "Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy," quotes a large number of testimonies in confirmation of this doctrine.

"Where do Roman Catholics find their rule of succession to the supremacy? Scripture is altogether silent about it; yet, in an affair of such vast moment, affecting the very framework of the Church, it might be presumed that God would have spoken clearly and distinctly in His revealed Word. But we do not find a syllable about the bishop of Rome and his succession to Peter's alleged supremacy. Nor will they discover their rule in the writings of the early fathers of the Church.

But they say that it has always been the ecclesiastical law that whatever privileges a bishop brought to his see, they were ingrafted upon it and were inherited by his successors.

We do not find this law in the primitive times of the Church. But if the Roman bishop holds his succession to the supremacy by virtue of an ecclesiastical law, then he is not the head of the Church *jure divino*, as they dogmatically teach, but *jure ecclesiastico*, and the Church which gave him the supremacy by this law, may take it away from him at any time she chooses, and confer it upon another. And if he be pope *jure ecclesiastico*, the Church would be superior to him, which is altogether subversive of his claims.

Again, they say that it was Peter's will that the bishop of Rome should succeed him in the primacy; that it was for the very purpose of avoiding all future disputes and difficulties about the succession, that he chose to be bishop of a particular see; that he first selected Antioch, but finding afterwards that Rome was a more suitable place for the exercise of the supreme headship, he transferred his bishopric to that city. I once heard a learned Roman Catholic bishop lecture very eloquently upon the wisdom of St. Peter in choosing Rome as the episcopal see from whence the Christian world should be governed; he showed from the geographical position of Rome that there was no city in the world better adapted for universal dominion; and that having been the mistress of the world, in pagan times, was the way prepared for her spiritual headship in Christendom. Such forms of argument you find not only in popular lectures, where their statement might be pardoned, but even in the writings of grave and learned theologians. The fact is, they have no plausible foundation whatever for the succession of the pope to the alleged primacy of St. Peter.

If such was Peter's will, how does that will appear? Where was it written and registered? It is nowhere to be found; and we must take nothing for granted here. Our opponents should bear in mind that mere conjectures are not arguments.

And if such had been his will, would he not have acted very unfairly in subjecting, after his death, St. John the Apostle, the beloved of the Lord, evangelist and seer, together with the other surviving Apostles, to the rule and will of Clement, ordinary bishop of Rome? Would it not have been reasonable and just to appoint St. John as his successor in the primacy?

Again, if such were Peter's will, does it deprive the

Church of her right to elect her supreme bishop ? They maintain that the pope is the universal bishop, having ordinary charge over the whole Church as his diocese. Now, if the presbyters and people of each Church exercised from the beginning the right of electing their ordinary bishop, why should the bishops, clergy, and people of the whole Church as the diocese of the universal bishop be deprived of the right of electing their supreme pastor ? Would such a high-handed proceeding, on the part of St. Peter, have been just towards the whole body of pastors who were all deeply concerned in that succession ? Should the pastors of the universal bishopric have fewer privileges than the clergy and people of an ordinary diocese ? Should they humbly bow down and submissively accept any one as their supreme spiritual head who might be imposed upon them by the clergy of the ordinary diocese of Rome ? We cannot suppose that Peter ever willed any such thing.

They say Peter knew what he was about : he foresaw the endless difficulties that would have been connected with a universal election by the whole Church, especially in perilous times.

But these difficulties, however great they may have been, do not remove the injustice of the case ; especially when we consider the manner in which the Roman bishop has since been elected. Why, the history of the succession of the Roman bishops is a standing scandal in Christendom. We find innumerable defects and corruptions in these elections ; often, if not ordinarily, the Roman bishopric was procured by ambition, bribery, or partiality, or managed by popular faction and tumults ; popes were intruded by powerful men or women, at their pleasure. If we study the history of these elections, we must admit that it is hard to see how Rome

retains the rightful succession, and how Pius IX. can claim to be a true successor of the first pope. Certainly, the papacy is not indefeasible ; since, according to its own rules, it must have been diverted into the wrong channel. Where was the papacy during the many schisms—twenty-two in number ? Who, in such times, was the universal teacher on whom the salvation of millions of souls depended ? Those were not popes, even according to Roman teaching, who were intruded by violence, and they were not few. Were those men rightful popes who obtained the papal see through the instrumentality of influential harlots ? How many elections had a flaw in them, and were therefore null and void ? They were not popes but heretics who were simoniacally chosen, and they were many. Could men be called popes who succeeded a deposed pope ? The pope, being sovereign, cannot be deposed.

Was it right that so important an office, on which the welfare of all Christendom and the salvation of souls are said to rest, should depend upon an election liable to so many taints and corruptions ? How short-sighted St. Peter would have been, if, in order to render the succession to the headship safe, he had restricted it to the see of a corrupt metropolis and left it at the mercy of an ambitious metropolitan clergy and a turbulent populace.

No ; St. Peter never dreamt of the papacy. The Scriptures, neither directly nor indirectly, know anything of the claims of the bishop of Rome.

But even tradition, that great thesaurus of Roman dogmas, is mute on the supremacy of the Roman bishop. Several fathers give us catalogues of traditional doctrines and observances, but in vain do we look for the papacy among them. Surely, such an important doctrine on which all orthodox

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teaching is said to hinge, should be a conspicuous article in the ancient creeds, and should not be omitted in the ancient catechisms or expositions of Christian belief. But we do not find it there. If the bishop of Rome were the head of the Church, the history of the papacy would be the history of the Church ; and therefore it is strange that Eusebius in his Church History ignores altogether the supremacy of the pope. Nor do any of the fathers, in speaking of the different Churches, or in explaining the nature of the government and discipline of the Church, ever mention such a headship or seem to be aware of the claims of the Roman bishop.

*The Apostolical Canons* and *The Constitutions of Clement*, two very ancient works, which describe the government of the Church, its various offices, discipline, and customs, the ranks, duties and privileges of all ecclesiastical persons, do not utter a single word about the pope and his prerogatives. But if he had been the universal monarch of the Church, it is singular that they should not even mention him or his office. From these works we distinctly gather that the Church is not an ecclesiastical monarchy.

If the pope had been acknowledged the universal teacher and pastor of the Church, the fathers, in their disputes against the heretics, would in the first place, have sought and urged his decree, as the conclusive argument, and as the most efficacious method of convincing or silencing them. But they appeal to Scripture, tradition, and reason, and seem not to be aware of such a universal teacher. Nay, they often resisted the teachings of the popes, and that, in later times, would have been considered downright heresy.

Moreover, even the bishops of Rome, themselves, for several centuries, did not dream of the high claims which their successors in the ages following advanced ; they were

not aware that they were the heads of the Church. In their elaborate works against heretics, they content themselves with urging testimonies of Scripture and arguments grounded thereon, never asserting their own definitive authority against them.

We may be certain that the divines of the Roman curia have made the most diligent search, in all the documents of Christian antiquity, for arguments and proofs in order to establish the supremacy of the pope, the central point of their system. But the impartial enquirer will find that they are not conclusive. It is painful to see how earnest men wrest words, and, from the pre-occupation of their minds, appear determined to make out their point by far-fetched applications and by strained inferences.

It is astonishing, if the pope were the sovereign monarch of the Church, as they would have him to be, that in so many ponderous volumes of ancient fathers, living through so many ages after Christ, those vast treasuries of learning and piety, in which all the truths of Christianity are discussed, and all the most important duties inculcated, this all-important article of faith, this momentous point of practice, this Christian duty of obedience to the pope as head of the Church should not be expressed in clear and peremptory terms.

When did this doctrine originate? How did it grow? How is it that it has got such a firm hold on the minds of men? Let us consider these points in our next lecture.

## LECTURE III.

### *DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAPACY—THE ROMAN BISHOPRIC IN THE UNDIVIDED CHURCH.*

THE papacy is the growth of ages. It commenced with the introduction of sacerdotalism into the Church and the coping stone was laid by Pius IX., in the Vatican Council. The student of history, following it step by step, perceives it growing before his eyes, but fails to notice any fine element in it. Clerical ambition had first to be introduced into the Church, before the bishop of Rome could dream of a primacy.

We find that the government of the Church in the first century was very simple. Congregations were small ; they assembled in private houses. Presbyters or elders, and deacons or ministers appear at first to have been the only officers. Soon bishops or superintending elders were appointed by the Apostles. The nature of orderly Church-government required that as the congregation increased some one elder should superintend the management of its affairs. The episcopal oversight did not long remain confined to one congregation. The bishop preached the Gospel in the neighbourhood, and formed new communities to which he appointed presbyters ; and it was proper and reasonable that he should also superintend these Churches. But the episcopal office of those times differed greatly from the episcopal sway and lordship which were afterwards claimed.

We find that the primitive Churches were entirely independent of each other, each one managing its own affairs in perfect liberty. But the government of the Church underwent a change towards the latter part of the second century, when Churches *associated* for mutual counsel and assistance and met together in Synods, to which each community sent its delegates. At first, each of these associations extended to one province only ; but soon these provincial synods gave rise to larger assemblies. It was the *system of association* which first increased the power of the bishops ; for they alone were considered the natural and rightful delegates and representatives of their Churches. It created new offices of honour and jurisdiction which soon became objects of ambition. A metropolitan was placed over each province, and a patriarch over associations of several provinces.

At the same time, the bishops commenced to look upon themselves as successors of the Apostles, and those Churches which were immediately founded by the Apostles enjoyed greater honour, and were called Apostolical Churches. The Churches lost their primitive independence, for they were now governed by canons framed in these synods and general assemblies.

At the same time, sacerdotalism and its satellite ritualism made their appearance and in course of time were firmly established in the Church, giving to the clergy an immense authority over the laity ; whilst the bishops came to be regarded as the high priests of their respective charges.

Thus we find that the government of the Church, in the third century had become an aristocratic oligarchy. It was contended that the universal authority of the Apostles had descended to the *whole body* of bishops. No single bishop was as yet believed to be the inheritor of all the Apostolical

powers, for all bishops alike were said to share in them, and they could not be exercised except by the whole united episcopate.

The bishops of the Apostolical Churches appear to have enjoyed greater honour; and the patriarchs of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were placed in the first rank. The bishop of Rome soon began to enjoy a pre-eminence of *order and association*, but not of jurisdiction. No bishop ruled as yet over another; they were perfectly independent in the management of their own dioceses. In the *Apostolical Canons*, *The Constitutions*, *The Recognitions*, *Clementine* and other documents which were forged about this time, we find no traces of a papal supremacy.

But the first incentives to this claim had been given and the first foundations of an ecclesiastical monarchy laid. The rights of the people and clergy had been destroyed by the bishops. The next step towards introducing an ecclesiastical sovereignty was to reduce the authority and independence of the bishops. A spiritual oligarchy having enslaved the people, the inevitable consequence must follow that an ecclesiastical despot will be found to subdue the episcopal oligarchy. At the end of the third century we find that the bishops have made the bishop of Rome the first patriarch in the Church. Out of this patriarchate the papacy was gradually but perseveringly developed.

The conversion of Constantine had a great influence on the government of the Church. The Christian Church became the Church of the Roman empire. Church and State were soon united. We read in Eusebius that the emperor divided the administration of the Church into *an external and internal inspection*; and although he left the latter to the bishops, he assumed the former to himself. He exercised supreme con-

trol over the whole ecclesiastical body in so far as he deemed it conducive to the public good. He accommodated the divisions of the Church into ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses to the divisions and subdivisions of the empire. Leaving to the bishops the government of their particular church, he aided them in determining controversies. To this end he called together the first general council at Nicaea, and his successors adopted the same ecclesiastical polity.

From this it is evident that, although the bishop of Rome was allowed to be the first patriarch, his primatial jurisdiction was even yet unknown. What would have been the need of general councils, if he had been the infallible head of the Church as Roman Catholics suppose him to be? Would the emperors have taken so active and prominent a part in the general oversight of the Church? Would not the pope have protested against undue secular interference? Yet, notwithstanding that the supposed claims of the Roman bishop were steadily, and without protest, ignored, the Roman see was moving onward, gradually and imperceptibly, towards supreme authority over the entire Church. It has ever been the policy of the bishops of Rome to hold fast and retain tenaciously what they have once got into possession, and to make it the stepping-stone to a further development of their power. We see nothing singular in this if we reflect that, ever since the third century, the bishops were the lords of the Church, and ambition was one of their besetting sins, in fact the curse of the Church. Each bishop considered it his sacred duty to preserve intact the privileges of his see, and, if possible, to enlarge them. The history of the Church presents to us a continual struggle of these priestly lords for the aggrandizement of their power. Episcopal ambition and lordly pride, indeed, have always been the bane of Christ's

Church. It seems, therefore, quite natural to us that the bishop of Rome should follow the example of his episcopal brethren and pursue the same course in maintaining and extending his rights. The papacy is the legitimate offspring of episcopal pride and corruption.

Circumstances favoured the prelate of Rome. It will be conceded by all that the lustre and *prestige* of a bishopric greatly depend upon the secular importance of the city over which he presides. Now, Rome was the imperial metropolis of the world; thither men resorted from all parts of the vast empire, either for the various purposes of civil government or for other sufficient reasons. The bishop of that city presided over the most wealthy and influential Church; he had the means of assisting those who applied to him for aid. Since the Church had become united with the State, he must have wielded considerable influence with the higher powers. He had the advantage of being known throughout the whole empire, and the splendour in which he lived excited general wonder and admiration.

It is quite natural that, as bishop of the first city, and enjoying advantages above the rest of his brethren, he should have been considered first bishop in the Church, and held in high esteem and veneration among his brethren. And it may be supposed that, as a matter of course, he enjoyed a certain pre-eminence of order and honour; that his opinion was sought by contending parties; and that in the assemblies he attended, the presidency devolved upon him, without dispute. That all these honours were showered upon him, at first, solely because he was bishop of the first city of the empire, is indisputable from the fact that as Constantinople afterwards became the imperial metropolis, the bishop of that city claimed equal honours with the bishop of Rome—because it was New Rome.

It is in the nature of power to grow and extend itself, laying hold of everything within its grasp, watching opportunities for its aggrandizement, and improving them to the best advantage, overcoming opponents and gaining new friends and adherents. Hence the growth of the papacy is a repetition of the old story, how mighty empires arise and grow out of small beginnings. Rome being the first city, an Apostolical see founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, its bishop claiming to be the successor of St. Peter,—these were the beginnings of the papacy, from which the race for supremacy began.

In this struggle for sovereignty, Rome had the advantage over secular powers because she claimed *spiritual* authority over the consciences of men. Spiritual power is of a growing nature ; it insinuates itself into the heart ; its arms are the most subtle, yet the most potent, and they cannot be captured or destroyed by any earthly opposition. They are always ready furnished and make a powerful impression, since the Church can promise God's blessing and eternal happiness to those who obey its commands, and threaten the disobedient with divine vengeance and eternal misery.

The next important step which the bishop of Rome took in his contest for the sovereignty of the Church may be traced in some canons of the council of Sardica (in 347) which introduced appeals to him, in certain cases. These canons are very doubtful in point of authenticity and, even if genuine, by no means recognise the supremacy or establish it, and at any rate were applicable only to the West. But they did the popes great service and proved potent engines by which to enlarge their power and enslave the Western Church. They were emboldened by them to receive all kinds of appeals and to reverse the judgments of provincial councils.

We find also that the imprudence of the emperors and the precipitate action of bishops afforded fatal opportunities for enhancing the power of the bishops of Rome. Although they were merely citizens like the other subjects of the empire, and instead of making ecclesiastical laws, were obliged to obey those made by the emperor or by councils convened under his orders, yet the emperors sometimes referred important causes to their judgment. Nay, Valentinian went so far as to enact a law (in 372), "empowering the bishop of Rome to examine and judge other bishops, that religious disputes might not be decided by profane or secular judges." The bishops would have spurned the idea of deriving their authority from the bishop of Rome or of holding their commissions by favour of the Roman see, because they considered themselves independent of it, both as regards the origin of their authority and the manner of exercising it. Yet we find that, as many of them were cringing flatterers of the powerful and influential Roman prelate, they unconsciously forged fetters for the entire episcopate. Thus the bishops assembled in council at Rome (in 378) highly approved of the above mentioned law of Valentinian and humbly petitioned the emperor Gratian to give it full force. These and similar laws, and not divine authority, formed some of the material out of which the papacy was built by slow yet sure instalments.

In order to understand the growth and development of the papal power we must also take into consideration the state of the Church during the first eight centuries. The whole empire was agitated by the most vital questions, both religious and political. The very existence of Christianity was at stake. Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Monothelism, &c., &c., with their numerous ramifications, were rend-

ing and convulsing Christendom. The bishops of the chief city were compelled to side either with the one party or the other. And it was but natural that the party with whom they sided, being successful, should look up to them as leaders and chieftains in their cause. Now, it so happened that, in those doctrinal questions which form the basis of Christianity, the Roman pontiffs took the side of the orthodox or Catholic party, which fought for the cause of truth and obtained the final victory. This espousal of the truth, and the successful issue of its contest with heresy, gave the bishops of Rome great influence in the Church. The foremost champions of the truth, such as Athanasius and Cyrilus, and other good bishops and eminent men who were violently persecuted by the heretical factions, sought and found shelter under the protection of the powerful bishop of Rome. As a matter of course, he was extolled by the prevailing party, and obtained both reputation and power. It was for this reason that the Sardican synod framed those canons of appeal which became one of the main engines by which he raised himself so high.

As we have stated above, the bishops commenced as early as the third century, if not earlier, to encroach upon the rights and privileges of the clergy and laity. Their turn of enslavement came on next, gradually, but surely. The history of the third and subsequent centuries presents to us a disgusting spectacle of prelatical ambition, dissension, and warfare. The whole empire was agitated by the ambitious schemes of the bishops. They endeavoured to extend their respective spheres of jurisdiction and encroached upon one another's rights. Pretexts were not wanting in palliation of their ambitious designs. Some thought the political importance of their episcopal city a sufficient reason for asserting

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ecclesiastical superiority; others alleged its Apostolical origin, pretended or real, as an incontrovertible ground of pre-eminence; others claimed episcopal jurisdiction over those regions which had been converted to Christianity through their instrumentality. These ambitious intrigues revolutionized the constitution of the Church, and *patriarchal government* was the issue. Thus another step was made towards an ecclesiastical monarchy. The patriarchate will finally be merged into the papacy, but the episcopate must first be weakened and humbled under the patriarchate, before it can be enslaved by one spiritual despot.

At first, only the bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were endowed with patriarchal dignity and jurisdiction. To these very soon the bishop of Constantinople was added, on account of the political importance of his see. The bishop of Jerusalem agitated next for patriarchal honours, on account of his see being the mother Church of Christendom, and these were confirmed to him by the Council of Chalcedon.

Henceforth the quarrels of these five patriarchs become conspicuous in the Church. In proportion as they allowed the bishops under their jurisdiction to trample on the rights of the people, they themselves curtailed the privileges of their brethren of the episcopal order and lorded it over them. Instead of promoting peace, they fomented dissensions in order to enjoy the exquisite pleasure of exerting the patriarchal power, which they constantly enlarged. In order to subdue the bishops, these lordly patriarchs became the special patrons of the monks, those lazy and turbulent pests with which the Church, especially in the East, was then swarming, and by munificent donations and concessions engaged their services to oppose the authority of the bishops. They were the ecclesiastical army of the few spiritual despots

who then ruled the Church. It appears to us that the monks have certainly been the principal instruments, in the hands of ambitious rulers, first in establishing and then in consolidating the papacy. At no time, even down to our own, could the papacy have continued to exist without them.

If the patriarchs oppressed their inferiors, they also tried to extinguish each other. The bishop of Constantinople contested the supremacy with the bishop of Rome, and used every form of intrigue to crush the other Eastern patriarchs. The latter, although struggling with all their might against that ambitious prelate, succumbed to his superior power and had to submit to his rule. But the Roman pontiff was too potent for the patriarch of Constantinople.

We have thus advanced another step in our exposition of papal development. Spiritual despotism is firmly rooted in the Church, and the contest for ecclesiastical supremacy is reduced to two rivals, the bishops of Rome and of Constantinople.

The dissensions in the east contributed to enhance the power of the Roman bishop; for the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, in their contests with the Byzantine prelate, alternately fled to Rome for succour and protection, and the inferior order of bishops applied also to the Roman see when their rights were encroached upon by the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch. Even the patriarchs of Constantinople, who, in their prosperity, rivalled the bishop of Rome, applied to him for aid when they were oppressed by the emperor, or when they had to contend with a rival competitor for their bishopric. If thus the Eastern bishops fled to Rome in their distress, there was a similar concourse thither from the West, where the pope exercised patriarchal jurisdiction without dispute.

This proceeding on the part of oppressed bishops does not prove the universal supremacy of the bishop of Rome, but it greatly increased his influence. For what will men not do when in straits? They must flee somewhere for redress, and if they believed that the patriarch of Rome could aid them, why should they not have recourse to him?

It was but natural that those who thus applied to Rome, should extol the authority of that see, not merely to display their gratitude, but also to advance their own cause; for the greater its authority, the more weight the decision of its bishop would have in their case.

Moreover, the Roman clergy, the bishops of Italy, and others in the West who basked in the sunshine of the bishop of Rome, enjoyed his favours and participated in his privileges would, of course, exert themselves to the utmost to enlarge his authority and induce him to believe that he was in fact and of right the ruler of the universal Church. It was their policy to urge him to higher assumptions, and assist him by all means to acquire power and maintain it. Even if there had been a Roman bishop of no ambition, his power would have grown of itself. He only needed to be passive therein, and his partisans would work for him, because they had as deep an interest in its firm establishment and solid advancement as himself.

But we have no instances of this want of ambition in the bishops of Rome. They were gradually, but by no means reluctantly, led into the belief that they were the spiritual sovereigns of the Church. Little by little their power increased. It was considered a sound maxim by the bishops, not only to retain what they possessed, but also to increase it. Why, then, should the bishop of Rome have scruples in enlarging his power? Men had recourse to him, and, in order to

obtain his countenance and influence in their behalf, used expressions magnifying his authority ; was it not natural that he should view this language in the light most favourable to himself ? Suplicants, in their addresses to him, often employed words which in themselves do not mean a real supremacy, but were nevertheless interpreted as implying it. Thus *successor of Peter*, *Apostolic see*, *prima sedes* are merely terms of honour ; the word of *bishop* applied to St. Peter does not mean a bishop in the proper sense ; the word *head* signifies any kind of eminence ; *prince*, any priority ; *to preside*, any kind of superiority ; *successor*, any derivation of power ; *authority*, any kind of influence upon the opinions and actions of men. The atmosphere in which the Roman bishops moved had the effect of inspiring them with the idea of power. They lived in great splendour, the men with whom they came in daily contact either crouched silently before them or treated them to the most fulsome adulation. Men are naturally prone to exalt power, and the possessor of it greedily accepts flattering words as true, and construes them in their most attractive sense. Hence it is not surprising that the bishops of Rome, in course of time, should become imbued with the belief that their authority extended beyond the limits of their patriarchate.

There are many reasons why the Roman pontiffs outran the patriarchs of Constantinople in the race for supremacy. The mighty political convulsions which commenced in the fourth century, contributed greatly to this end. The imperial power was on the wane, and its abandonment of Rome and removal to Constantinople, instead of diminishing the authority of the Roman bishop, greatly increased it ; nay, left it almost free of control. From this time forth, besides the spiritual, he commenced, also, to assume a temporal

sway ; for not only did the order of the city depend greatly on his authority, but sometimes he was obliged to meet the invading conquerors of the North and treat with them for its very life and existence. Where kings and emperors would have failed, the Roman *pontifex maximus* succeeded.

The incursions of the barbarians contributed greatly to the advancement of his power. For when those rude and unsophisticated sons of the North perceived how the people were led by the bishops and how they depended upon the pope, they were moved by the desire to reconcile this potent high priest by treating him with the deepest reverence and conferring upon him all the honours and benefits they could bestow.

It may seem paradoxical, yet it is true, that these northern nations, so free and unbridled, contributed more than any other single cause to the growth and consolidation of the papacy. As pagans they were absolutely enslaved by their priests, the druids, whose authority they consulted in all affairs, civil or military. They had a chief druid or high priest who exercised boundless power and whom they honoured with the most abject veneration. Now when they, almost *en masse*, embraced Christianity, they brought all this slavish submission into the Church and lavished it upon the Christian priesthood : they regarded the bishops as they had erewhile regarded the druids and the pope as the archdruid, and conferred upon him an authority greater than he had enjoyed as *pontifex maximus*.

However, the papal edifice was by no means complete even yet. What Rome had gained in the West, it lost in the East. The contest between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople continued without respite until the final rupture in the ninth century. The Roman bishops sometimes gained advantages

over their Eastern patriarchal opponent ; but they were only temporary. It was a contest not only about the limits of their respective patriarchal jurisdictions, but also touching supreme dominion over the whole Church. Both were determined and obstinate ; one or other must ultimately yield, or the contest would finally end in a schism between Western and Eastern Christendom. Pope Gregory the Great in vain opposed the assumption of the title of *Œcumene* Bishop by the bold prelate of Constantinople (A.D. 588). Pope Boniface III. prevailed upon the Emperor Phocas, notorious for his crimes and tyranny, to take from the bishop of Constantinople the title of *Œcumene* Bishop and confer it upon the Roman bishop. This is the first instance in which we find the papal supremacy openly and officially recognized, but it was never acknowledged in the East. Other causes afterwards added fuel to the bitter animosity. Favourable opportunities several times presented themselves for healing the old wounds and uniting the two Churches ; but the insatiable ambition and unreasonable demands of the Roman pontiff destroyed all possibility of an amicable adjustment, and a final and complete disruption was the result.

Thus the grasping ambition of the bishop of Rome was the cause of the division of Christendom into two great sections bitterly opposed to each other. He never held sway in the East and never exercised supreme authority over intellectual Greeks ; it was amongst the Western barbarians only that he managed to develop the monstrous claims of the papacy.

Let us continue the consideration of this development in our next lecture.

## LECTURE IV.

### *DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAPACY AFTER THE GREAT SCHISM.*

LET us continue, in this lecture, our review of the development of the papacy. We have followed it up to the schism between the East and West. The West, henceforth, is the only field in which the bishops of Rome may put forth their ambitious claims. But even here this development required centuries.

They directed every effort, religious and political, to establish and enlarge the authority and pre-eminence they had obtained from Phocas, the most odious tyrant that ever disgraced the annals of history. But we find that their ambitious views were strongly opposed, not only by the emperors and kings, but also by the various nations of the West. Their election and confirmation depended on the will of the civil powers. They had to obey the temporal rulers and act as dutiful subjects, like other citizens. We learn from Bede that the ancient Britons and Scots knew nothing of the papacy and could not be induced to submit to the decrees of the arrogant Roman pontiffs. Spain and Gaul retained, for a long time, their ecclesiastical independence, and often sturdily opposed the encroachments of the papal see. Even in Italy his power was limited ; and there were multitudes of private persons who opposed the lordly ambition of the bishops of Rome. Yet, such opposition was by no means considered as savouring of heresy or schism.

The next great step towards universal dominion made by the pope was his investiture with temporal sovereignty. Indeed, we may say that he possessed no real spiritual dominion until after he became a temporal prince. The papacy was the outgrowth of favouring circumstances. His temporal power sprang from the feeble condition and final decay of the Roman empire, and the peculiarly favourable disposition of the invaders from the North. These barbarian conquerors, when they embraced Christianity, not only transferred to the Church all the old superstitious reverence with which they had regarded the druids, but also heaped upon her a large proportion of the rich spoils they had taken from conquered nations. Not content with giving gold and silver, they manifested their superstitious veneration for the clergy by conferring upon bishops, churches, and monasteries feudatory rights over whole provinces, cities, castles, and fortresses. This unwonted accession of wealth and power began with their head, the Roman pontiff, who not only gladly received it, but claimed it as a right, adducing proofs from Scripture and forged documents of former territorial donations.

The temporal power of the pope had its real origin in the unjust aid which Pope Zachary afforded to Pepin in dethroning Childeric, king of France, and usurping the crown for himself. Pepin, in order to attach to himself the powerful pontiff, freed him from the yoke of the Lombards and conferred on him sovereign rights over the Roman dukedom. Charlemagne completed the conquest of the Lombards and confirmed and enlarged the grant which his father Pepin had made to the pope.

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lemagne, and crowned him solemnly at Rome, added immensely to the dignity and development of the papal authority. From that time forward the popes claimed the right to confirm and crown the emperors. Nothing, however, contributed more to the enlargement of the papacy than the investiture of the pope and the bishops with temporal sovereignty: for the pope had now the means of enforcing his spiritual claims.

He was greatly favoured in the enlargement of his despotic authority by the exaggerated views which began to be entertained in the eighth century of the terrible potency of excommunication. In former ages excommunication entailed, it is true, many disagreeable results, yet the excommunicated person was not deprived of his privileges as a citizen, or of the common rights of humanity. The Northern Nations brought with them into the Church their high and monstrous views in regard to ecclesiastical excommunication. They attributed to it the same terrible effects which they had believed that the excommunication of their pagan priests brought upon the accursed. Hence persons who were excluded from the communion of the Church by the pope or bishops forfeited on that account, not only all their civil rights as citizens, but also the common privileges of humanity. Excommunication had the awful effect of dissolving all connexions; it meant outlawry from all society, complete degradation of the man. King or prince, under this fearful sentence, not only lost his crown, but became an object of aversion to all his subjects. No wonder that the popes, with such a weapon in their hands, could go onward in their march for absolute and unlimited supremacy, and finally claim to be *supreme lords of the universe*.

Again and again did the papacy profit and grow stronger

by the disturbed state of the empire. It might have been a blessing to the world and, in many cases, have prevented war and bloodshed ; but in order to obtain its sinister ends it often plunged nations into long wars, social confusion, and misery. It learned its first lessons of temporal aggrandizement in the fall of the old Roman empire ; success emboldened it and, through a long series of centuries, it became the universal marplot—the promoter of commotions and bloodshed amongst the European nations. Its sole aim was to become a powerful and universal *kingdom of this world*. It obtained its end ; but how much misery and injustice has it to answer for !

From the time that it acquired the first beginnings of temporal sovereignty, we have to look upon it as a *political institution* and to explain almost every step in its career on political grounds. Its history exhibits the worst features of intrigue, and the most unblushing knavery, displayed chiefly in the forgery of documents to sustain its enormous pretensions.

The popes could never have succeeded but for the gross ignorance and superstition which for many centuries covered the European nations like a thick cloud ; for spiritual despotism can only be exercised over an ignorant and superstitious people.

Another important step was made by the pope in the direction of temporal influence, when he assumed to himself the right of nomination to the imperial throne. The fierce and bloody war that broke out between the posterity of Charlemagne, after the death of Lewis II., first furnished him with an opportunity of exercising this pretended right. He obtained new concessions and large sums of money, by appointing successively, Charles the Bold, Carloman, and

Charles the Fat. After the death of these Emperors, the empire was rent in pieces; the greatest confusion reigned everywhere, and the highest bidder was generally raised to the Imperial throne by the greedy pontiffs.

The popes, in this confused state of things, made mighty strides in their course towards universal dominion. Their influence, in civil affairs, rose in a short time to an extravagant height, by the favour of kings and princes, on whose behalf they had employed the authority superstition had given them over the minds of the people. From the same causes, their dominion in religious matters made equal progress. From the time of Lewis the Meek, the ancient rules of ecclesiastical government were gradually changed in the West. The princes lost that influence in Church-matters which they had exercised since Charlemagne, the bishops their independence, and the general and provincial councils their authority. By every means in his power, the pope endeavoured to persuade all that he was the supreme legislator and universal bishop of the Church; that all bishops derived their powers from him; that all councils, both general and provincial, had no authority but from him, and could do nothing without his permission and consent.

Of course all these pretensions were advanced at favourable opportunities, when the minds of the people had been sufficiently prepared and seemed ripe for their reception. But it was not to be expected that so thorough a change in the government of the Church could be made without a certain amount of opposition. The bishops of Rome were aware that their word and authority alone were not sufficient to introduce the new order of things. They knew that they must produce ancient documents by which they might

justify their course. And as there were no such documents in existence, *they forged them.*

Forgery was not a new art to the Roman pontiffs. They had forged documents before the ninth century, and had been successful. Rome had been habituated to it by a long series of systematic fabrications extending back to the sixth century. To glorify the Roman see, spurious *Acts of Roman Martyrs* began to be compiled, at the beginning of the sixth century, and were produced from time to time, afterwards, for some centuries. For a similar purpose the story of the *Conversion and Baptism of Constantine* was invented, to make Pope Sylvester appear to have been a worker of miracles. About 514 the *Acts of the Council of Sinuessa*, *The Legend of Pope Marcellinus*, and the *Constitution of Sylvester* were forged to prove that no one could judge the Roman see. The *Gesta Liberii* and the *Gesta of Sextus III.* were fabricated in defence of these popes. The works of St. Cyprian were interpolated to suit the pretensions of the Roman bishop. The *Liber Pontificalis* was another forgery, commenced in the sixth century, and continued afterwards. It was devised to prove the "Acts of the Roman Martyrs," to confirm the existing legends about popes and emperors, and to exhibit the popes as legislators for the whole Church. After the middle of the eighth century the famous *Donation of Constantine* was concocted at Rome, in order to induce Pepin to concede temporal sovereignty to the bishop of Rome. Other fabrications appeared soon afterwards, for the purpose of persuading Charlemagne and his successors to confirm and enlarge the temporal power.

We may say, therefore, that Rome was the hot-bed of forgery and continued so for several centuries. When the popes of the ninth century desired to give credit to their new ecclesi-

astical code, they were not at any loss for documents. They forged them ; nay, they were ready at hand ; and had already been forged for them. A writer in the west of Gaul —about 845—desirous of protecting the bishops against the metropolitans and secular princes, fabricated a large number of pretended decrees of popes, acts of councils, and other documents. He prefixed to them the venerated name of Isidore, bishop of Seville, in order to make it appear that this great man had collected them. He completely failed of his purpose ; for the collection, instead of freeing the bishops, completely enslaved them.

These spurious decretals became a powerful instrument in the hands of Nicholas I. (858-867) in pushing the limits of the Roman supremacy to the point of absolute monarchy. This bold and aspiring pontiff met the doubts of the Frankish bishops, who opposed them, with the assurance that these documents and all others ever issued by his predecessors were preserved with honour in the Roman archives. And in a synod held at Rome (863) he anathematized all who should refuse to receive the teaching or ordinances of a pope.

Hence these pseudo-Isidorian decretals became the foundation of the papal claims to supreme dominion. Never, in all history, has a forgery been so successful. For three centuries now, this huge fraud has been exposed, not only by Protestant, but also by Roman Catholic scholars ; yet the principles it introduced have taken such deep root in the Church, that the exposure of the fraud has produced no tangible effect in shaking the papal system.

After the seeds of the new ecclesiastical code had thus been sown by Nicholas I. a blight seems to have fallen upon the papacy for the next two hundred years. With scarcely an exception, the popes of this period were so many monsters,

not men, pretending to be heads of the Church and consecrated to the service of religion. They were guilty of the most flagitious crimes, as Roman Catholics themselves admit. The Roman see became the prey and plaything of rival factions of nobles and even of dissolute women. For a long time, the Tuscan counts made the pontificate hereditary in their family. Again and again profligate boys occupied and disgraced the Roman see, until, at length, when three popes were contending for the papal chair, the Emperor Henry III. put an end to the scandal by elevating a German bishop to the papacy.

With Leo IX. commenced the Hildebrandine era of the papacy. Two centuries had elapsed since Nicholas I., on the basis of the pseudo-Isidorian forgeries, had introduced a new ecclesiastical code. In the state of corruption and ignorance which followed, the seed had taken firm root in the Church. Everyone now accepted the false decretals as authentic and true; yet the Church lay prostrate. The evil must be remedied; and a still greater concentration of power in the Roman pontiff, by the establishment of an absolute spiritual monarchy was looked upon as the only remedy. A powerful party was formed in the Church, of which Hildebrand was the leader, which laboured with all its might to weld together all the Christian states into a theocratic priest-kingdom, with the pope at its head. It was the aim of this party not only to render the pope the absolute and supreme monarch in all spiritual matters, as bishop of bishops, but also to make him the king of kings and to emancipate the Church altogether from the control of princes and people. It was held that he possessed the power of creating and deposing kings, and of giving away whole kingdoms to whomsoever he pleased. Hildebrand was the adviser of Leo IX., and his immediate

successors. At his instigation, Nicholas II. gave Calabria and Sicily to Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia, on condition that, as a faithful vassal, he should acknowledge an inviolable allegiance and fealty to the Roman see. There was no earthly reason justifying this act, except that the pope had the whole universe for his domain. He, also, advised the same pontiff to give the election of the pope altogether into the hands of the cardinals and to deprive the emperor and the people of any voice in the matter.

Hildebrand succeeded Alexander II., and assumed the title of Gregory VII. I shall say nothing, in this brief outline, of his character ; for it is well known to every reader of history. "None of his predecessors is like unto him. If they had ambitious ends in view, they never rose to the highest pinnacle in their pretensions, nor did they set them forth with sufficient clearness and distinctness ; their aims were high, but hazy and confused. But Gregory VII. knew what he was about. He alone of all the popes may be said to have had the clear and determinate purpose of introducing a new constitution for the Church and by new means. Nicholas I. alone approaches him in this, but none of the later popes, all of whom have only followed him as their leader and carried out the plans which he laid down."

"Gregory saw from the first that synods regularly held by the popes, and new codes of Church law, were the means for introducing the new system. Synods had been held, at his suggestion, by Leo IX. and his successors, and he himself carried on the work in those assembled after 1073. But only popes and their legates were henceforth to hold synods ; in every other form the institution was to disappear. Gregory collected about him by degrees the right men for elaborating his system of Church-law. Anselm of Lucca, nephew of

Alexander II., compiled a most important and comprehensive work, at his command, between 1080 and 1086. Anselm may be called the founder of the new Gregorian system of Church-law, first, by extracting and putting into convenient working shape everything in the Isidorian forgeries serviceable to the papal absolutism ; next, by altering the law of the Church, through a tissue of fresh inventions and interpolations, in accordance with the requirements of his party and from the stand-point of Gregory. Then came Deusdedit, whom Gregory made a cardinal, with fresh inventions. At the same time Bonizo compiled his work, the main object of which was to exalt the papal prerogative. The forty propositions or titles of this part of his work correspond entirely to Gregory's *Dictatus* and the materials supplied by Anselm and Deusdedit. The last great work of the Gregorians (before Gratian) was the *Polycarpus* of Cardinal Gregory of Pavia (before 1118), which almost always adheres to Anselm in its falsifications." (*The Pope and the Council, by Janus*, page 82.)

"Clearly and cautiously as the Gregorian party went to work, they lived in a world of dreams and illusions about the past and about remote countries. They could not escape the imperative necessity of demonstrating their new system to have been the constant practice of the Church, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish where involuntary delusion merged into conscious deceit. Whatever present exigencies required was selected from the mythical stores at their command hastily and recklessly ; then fresh inventions were added, and soon every claim of Rome could be shown to have a legitimate foundation in existing records and decrees." (*Ibid.*, page 84.)

"It is so far true to say, that without the pseudo-Isidore

there would have been no Gregory VII., that the Isidorian forgeries were the broad foundation upon which the Gregorians built. But the first object of Isidore was to secure the impunity of bishops, whereas the Roman party—which for a long time had a majority of the bishops against it—wanted to introduce a state of things in which the popes or their legates could summarily depose bishops, intimidate them, and reduce them to complete subjection to the papal behests. The newly invented doctrines about the deposing power contributed to this end. In a word, a new history and a new civil and canon law were required, and both had to be obtained by improving on the Isidorian principles with new forgeries. The corruption of history was to some extent provided for in Germany by the monk Bernold, and in Italy by the zealous Gregorian Bonizo, bishop of Piacenza, who tried, among other things, to get rid of the coronation of Charles the Great. The other assistants had to invent or adapt historical facts for party purposes, for their new codes of Church-law innovated largely upon ancient Church-precedent. Gregory himself had his own little stock of fabricated or distorted facts to support, pretensions and undertakings which seemed to his contemporaries strange and unauthorized."

"At the same time Gregory thought it most important, with all his legislative activity, lofty claims, and high-handed measures, not to seem too much of an innovator and despot; he constantly affirmed that he only wished to restore the ancient laws of the Church and to abolish recent abuses. When he drew out the whole system of papal omnipotence in twenty-seven theses in his *Dictatus*, those theses were partly repetitions or corollaries of the Isidorian decretals; but, on the other hand, he and his friends and allies sought

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to give them the appearance of tradition and antiquity by new fictions." (*Ibid.*, page 84-86).

We might continue quoting from this erudite work and show how, by the aid of well-fabricated forgeries, Gregory and his co-workers imposed their new constitution upon the Church.

Nor was he remiss in enforcing his claims, with all boldness and against all opposition. Whenever it appeared possible, he endeavoured to engage in the bonds of allegiance to the Roman see the kings and princes of Christendom. Here he met with strong opposition, but nevertheless proved successful in a number of cases.

It was the policy of this haughty and imperious pontiff to resort constantly to extreme measures in enforcing his decrees against abuses. Thus, to eradicate the vice of concubinage from among the clergy, he enforced complete celibacy, punishing not only the guilty but also the innocent, by compelling them to send away their lawful wives, without delay. By thus destroying all family-ties of the clergy, he thought to render them more devoted to the Church; but it cannot be questioned that enforced celibacy has been a fruitful cause of immorality in the Church of Rome.

Moreover, in order to repress the vice of simony connected with the investiture of bishops and abbots who held temporal domains, he adopted the extreme measure of depriving the emperor, kings and princes of all voice and control in nominating to vacant bishoprics and benefices. And when the emperor Henry IV. resisted the most odious provisions of the papal decree, Gregory deposed him, absolving his subjects from the oath of allegiance, and treating him in the most shameful manner. At the pope's instigation, another emperor was elected and confirmed by him. Thus the whole empire

was plunged into the horrors of a civil war, which lasted for many years. In a word, the whole activity of this unscrupulous but powerful pope was employed not only in tyrannizing over all orders of the Church, but also in aiming deadly blows at the thrones of emperors, kings, and princes. His pontificate was a continual scene of tumult and bloodshed, all occasioned by his ambitious arrogance.

From Gregory VII. to Boniface VIII. (1073-1294) the papacy was at the zenith of its power and glory. It is the golden period of papal supremacy over Church and State. They acted as lords of the universe, establishing kingdoms and giving them away at pleasure, deposing emperors and kings and absolving subjects from the oath of allegiance ; and stirring up the most deadly wars wherever their authority was contradicted. They endeavoured, by all means at their command, to make the whole world a theocratic priest-kingdom ; and we may truly affirm that the Roman pontiffs were at the bottom of nearly all the wars which deluged Europe with blood, during this period of papal absolutism. A desperate struggle was going on between the empire and the priesthood, the popes advancing their monstrous pretensions with characteristic power and cunning ; the emperors and princes, on the other hand, using their utmost efforts to disconcert their measures and to curb their power. The effect of these unhappy dissensions was felt throughout all the European nations. Who, we ask, is answerable for the cruel civil wars that were caused by the deposition of emperors and kings, and the absolving of subjects from the oath of allegiance, but the haughty bishops of Rome ? What else caused the long and bitter contests between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, but the determined resolution of the popes to establish and maintain their lordly

ascendancy? And who, in countries beyond the limits of the Roman empire, were the chief instigators of political conspiracies, who fomented civil strife and contention, but the Roman pontiffs who were everywhere present, through the agency of crafty and unscrupulous emissaries and legates? Let the impartial student of history answer.

Roman Catholics justify the deposing power of the pope and his constant interference in the secular government of kingdoms, on the pretext that it formed part of the international law of those times; that it was a right accorded to him by the European nations: in a word, that the pope was looked upon as a sort of *international king* and as the universal arbitrator between contending parties.

We answer that this justification contradicts the plainest facts of history. No; the secular governments, far from according to the popes this power, strenuously resisted it; hence those wars and tumults. On the other hand, the popes claimed it as a sacred right inherent in their office as heads of the Church. They cherished it as a token and evidence of the plentitude of their power. The *bulis*—and they are numerous—in which they assert and exercise this pretended power, do not utter the language of a mere arbitrator, whose authority depends on the consent of the contending parties. Consent of the contending parties, indeed! Why, it was the pope himself who in most cases occasioned disputes, by his encroaching and ambitious pretensions, and then used the lash on the party that contradicted him. It was the pope who claimed as his possessions and fiefs all the kingdoms of the world, by virtue of his supreme headship over the Church. It was the pope who, under the pretext of his inherent power, created new kingdoms, and appointed kings and princes over them. It was the pope who asserted that none

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could rule without his consent, approval, and supervision. There is no semblance of any international law, during the period of the papal ascendancy, nominating the pope an arbitrator between the nations. True, they often did good by their timely and opportune interference in secular matters, in those distracted times ; but we cannot shut our eyes to the immense mischief they inflicted on the superstitious and long-suffering peoples of Europe. Most certainly they laid claim to this immense power solely in virtue of their office.

But to return to our narrative. Let us touch upon the principal features of the development of the papacy, during the period of its highest splendour.

After the death of Gregory VII., the same restless element continued to disturb both Church and state. The policy, which he had inaugurated, of introducing a new constitution into the Church, and of rendering the papacy supreme in all matters, both ecclesiastical and temporal, was steadily and unflinchingly pursued by his successors. The contest about investitures went on with unabated bitterness. Urban II. was not behind Gregory in arrogance and pride ; he even surpassed him in bold and audacious measures. In the famous council of Clermont, where he kindled a new war against the Mohammedan possessors of the Holy Land, he published a law forbidding the bishops and the rest of the clergy to take the oath of allegiance to their respective sovereigns.

Paschal II. was another instance of insatiable and inflexible papal ambition. He not only renewed the extreme measures of his predecessors against investitures and the excommunications against Henry IV. ; but it is believed that he instigated an unnatural son of this unhappy and pope-persecuted emperor to rebel against his father and to ascend

the imperial throne under the name of Henry V. It is, at least, unquestionably certain that Paschal II. dissolved the oath of allegiance which Henry had taken to his father, and adopted the cause of this unnatural rebel.

During the space of fifty-five years, after the death of Gregory VII., the papal chair was occupied by monks who governed like monks. Not only were they of obscure birth and of unbounded avarice and ambition, but as heads of the Church, they displayed that unbending temper and obstinacy, which are essential ingredients in the character of a monk. It was not until Guy, archbishop of Vienna, duke of Burgundy, and a near relative of the emperor, a man of an ingenuous and magnanimous character and liberal education, was raised to the papal throne, under the name of Calixtus II. (in 1120), that the question concerning investitures was finally settled. A little moderation was all that was required for this purpose. If his predecessors had possessed even a modicum of that quality, torrents of blood and thousands of valuable lives would have been saved.

The contest between the emperors and popes was renewed under Hadrian IV. (in 1155), a native of England, whose former name was Nicholas Breakspear; it increased in vehemence under Alexander III., who loaded the emperor Frederick Barbarossa with anathemas and execrations, deposed him in the year 1167, and exhorted his subjects to shake off the yoke. Alexander's success in his contest with the proud emperor raised the papacy to an enormous height. This pope, like some of his predecessors, exercised the pretended right of erecting new kingdoms, by conferring the title of king upon Alfonso I., duke of Portugal.

But the papacy reached the highest pitch of power under Innocent III., who became pope in the year 1198. Circum-

stances enabled him to enlarge his own immediate temporal dominion, the states of the Church. He claimed to be the supreme lord over all kingdoms ; and whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself, he asserted this outrageous claim. He gave a King to the Armenians ; and, in 1204, erected Bohemia into a kingdom, and bestowed the royal dignity upon Primislaus. He appointed the Duke of Bulgaria and Wallachia king over that territory, and crowned Peter II. king of Arragon. But above all, he endeavoured to exercise lordship over the emperor and other powerful kings of Europe. And when these princes resisted his ambitious and overbearing interference, he hurled sentences of excommunication and depositions against them, which took terrible effect in desolation and bloodshed. No monarch felt more severely the galling despotism of this haughty pontiff than John, surnamed Sans Terre, king of England.

Thus the papacy went on in its glory, acquiring constantly new power and consolidating what it had acquired, up to the time of Boniface VIII. in 1294. This arrogant pontiff carried the pretensions of the papacy to a height somewhat akin to frenzy. His bulls are an everlasting monument of the abuse of spiritual power, of monstrous pretension and undisguised absolutism. But Philip the Fair, king of France, knew how to subdue the pretentious pope ; and after his death the papal residence was transferred to Avignon, where it remained for seventy years.

Let us pause here for a moment and enquire into the causes which, after Gregory VII., mainly contributed to increase and consolidate the absolutism of the popes.

The revival of the Roman law in the twelfth century afforded an excuse to the Roman pontiffs and their adherents for having the canon law placed on the same honourable

footing. With this view, Gratian, a Benedictine monk of Bologna, about 1130, composed an epitome of canon law for the use of schools. Gratian made this collection from the Isidorian forgeries, and from the writings of those who assisted Hildebrand in introducing the new Church constitution. It goes by the name of *Decretum Gratiani*. And as it had for its object the establishment and justification of papal absolutism, it was patronized by the popes, although it abounded in the grossest errors. Almost immediately after its appearance, it became the standard work on canon law and its authority was appealed to as final. No book has contributed more towards advancing the absolute power of the popes than this consolidation of forgeries. Several other books of papal decrees were afterwards appended by different popes, so as to make the collection of the *corpus juris canonici* complete. Canon-law became the favourite study of the clergy ; and all who sought to obtain ecclesiastical preferment in the Roman curia, were required to be proficients in this science. All the so-called learning, thus disseminated, worked in the interest of the papal system ; for every part of the canon-law made for Rome and gave renewed power to the pope.

The crusades, which were carried on during this period of papal splendour, brought with them a new source of influence to the Roman pontiffs. The whole of Europe felt an earnest interest in these holy wars. The popes were their animating soul ; they appointed the leaders, awarded privileges to the crusaders, and adjusted the system of penances and indulgences. They were the superiors of those powerful military orders which originated during the period of the crusades and spread their ramifications throughout Europe. All this gave additional weight to the authority of the popes.

Moreover, the two great universities of the world, Paris and Bologna, which were in the hands of the monks, the faithful allies of the popes, were under complete papal control and performed their part in advancing the power of the spiritual monarchy. Then again the new religious orders of mendicant friars contributed more effectually perhaps than any other agency to undermine the old Church-system and to introduce the new order of things, in which they were to rule together with the pope. The most absolute and overbearing popes were monks themselves, and had nothing in common with the bishops and parish-priests.

After the removal of the papal residence to Avignon, the authority of the popes commenced to decline. Then followed the long schism of forty years, which still further lowered it in the estimation of Christendom. The councils of Constance and Basle healed the schism, by declaring the general council, *i.e.* the Church, superior to the popes. The newly elected pope, Martin V., and his successor, Eugenius IV., approved these decrees, and thus condemned in advance the recent Vatican council.

But why did not the nations throw off the yoke of the papacy since they had so bitterly experienced the curse it had brought on all Christendom ? Alas ! they were not yet ripe for that important step ; they were still too much trammeled by ecclesiastical traditionalism : in a word, they knew no other Church-system than the papacy. They knew that it had deeply fallen, and that it was the fruitful source of discord and corruption in the Church, but they fancied that it could be reformed.

Reformed ! They were deceived ; the papacy is irreformable, for a pestilential and intoxicating air seems to surround the papal throne. So soon as they had set it on its legs

again, so soon as it was able to stand, it kicked against the reforming decrees and tendencies of these councils and repudiated their authority. A papal reaction took place almost immediately, which resisted every attempt at reform. The papacy relapsed into its former corruption. Christendom was compelled to see the papal throne occupied by an Alexander VI., who scandalized the Church by the most notorious crimes and degrading vices, and was infinitely worse than any pope who flourished during the pornography of the eleventh century. The papal yoke became more galling than ever.

Hence we are not astonished that, when the humble and resolute monk of Wittenberg raised his eloquent voice boldly against the papacy, millions were ready to join him in the noble crusade. The reformation inflicted a severe, but not deadly, blow on the papacy. Its absolutism was crippled; but it entered on a new path of pretension. Henceforth the claim to infallibility was set forth as the panacea for curing all its ills, as a means of regaining the ground it had lost and of inspiring the members of the Church with renewed confidence. Let us consider this claim in our next lecture.

Men and brethren, does not the history of the development of the papacy clearly show that the Christian Church as an outward and visible institution is not endowed with the gift of infallibility? History teaches that the papacy is a huge imposition—a glaring lie. The Church-sanctioned this monster lie and became identified with it. How can any one maintain, after this, that she is infallible? The very existence of the papacy within the Church, nay, at the very head of the Church is the strongest refutation of the doctrine of Church infallibility.

## LECTURE V.

### *DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.*

**I**N our last two lectures, we considered the principal features in the development of papal absolutism, and saw how from small beginnings it grew to be an all-absorbing power. But mere absolutism does not close the history of papal development. Secular power may rest when it has reached the apex of despotism, and rely on its might. But spiritual absolutism has no *raison d'être* and no reasonable and firm hold on the conscience, unless it lays claim to the gift of infallibility. Inerrancy must needs be the foundation of an absolute spiritual monarchy.

The popes knew and felt this exigency. Hence we observe that, from the very beginning, and whilst they were aiming at universal and supreme dominion, they put forth also their claim to infallibility, timidly and obscurely at first, but with gradually increasing firmness afterwards.

Circumstances favoured their efforts to obtain absolute power, but the Church's acknowledgment and endorsement of their personal infallibility remained unconceded; indeed, the Church resisted this claim. She had discovered, by bitter experience, that papal absolutism was the source of all her ills. Whence arose that scandalous condition of the papacy, commonly called the Roman pornography, and the consequent

prostration of the Church which commenced with the pretensions of Nicholas I. and lasted for more than two centuries, but from the intoxication of absolute power ? Whence those civil broils, and those torrents of blood, under such popes as Gregory VII., Paschal II., Alexander III., Innocent III., Boniface VIII., and others, but from the abuse of papal absolutism ? Whence the many schisms, especially the long one lasting forty years, but from the excessive thirst of the popes for despotic power ? What do the Councils of Constance and Basle mean, but a rising of the Church above the prevailing absolutism of the papacy, and a stern resolve to apply the remedy to abuses ? Where would the popedom now be, into what fearful abyss would it have sunk, had not the Church come to its rescue, in the Council of Constance, by proving herself superior to it and claiming her pristine rights ? But alas ! the Church was too feeble ; and papal absolutism had taken too deep root. She only clipped the wings of the papacy ; they soon grew again, and its pretensions became as vigorous and lofty as ever whilst the Church appeared to sink more and more into hopeless corruption.

But no ! God is with her. She suffered and lay prostrate but she will rise again. Whence those mighty risings of the sixteenth century ? Whence the grand upheaval of the Reformation ? It is the Church which is in the agonies of new birth. She is wrestling to be free from the intolerable yoke of papal despotism. She comes out from the popedom and leaves it far behind in the gloom of the past. She cannot convert it to the truth, nor is she able to destroy it ; for it is too wealthy and too mighty in temporal resources ; in short, it is a kingdom of this world.

All that she can do is to *protest* against its absolutism and

corruption. But her protest is powerless and the papacy remains. Too many have a worldly interest wrapped up in its continued existence. It persecutes, and wages cruel wars against the Reformation ; it calls to its aid the bloody inquisition, and where the reformed Churches cannot be reached by open hostility, it sends out its secret emissaries to intrigue or sow the seeds of discord amongst them.

Secret emissaries ! yes, Rome has always had its secret emissaries. From the very beginning of popedom, the monks have been its faithful allies and secret tools. They always acknowledged in the pope their absolute master and liberal patron. From him and through him they enjoyed honour, wealth, immunities, and privileges. If it had not been for the monks, there would be no papal absolutism. If the old orders proved unequal to new emergencies, new ones were called into existence.

Thus, at the time of the Reformation, the order of the Jesuits took its rise to assist the papacy against its enemies, and to defend its threatened cause. No order of monks was ever so well adapted to secure the final triumph of hierarchical monarchy as the Society of Jesus. They received within their body none but those who could be made really useful —they discarded altogether the proverbial laziness of the monks. Only men of more than ordinary talent and genius were accepted within their ranks. Their policy was prudence, but that prudence soon degenerated into craftiness and cunning. Their guiding and supreme purpose was to advance the interests of the Roman Church both within and without her pale. They went forth as zealous missionaries to the Indies and the new World ; and we find them in Protestant countries, in all disguises, like cunning serpents, struggling to undo the work of the Reformation. We cannot deny that

Jesuitism has been the greatest foe of Protestantism and are forced to acknowledge that on many occasions it has proved only too successful in its assaults.

But within the pale of the Roman Church itself the Jesuits have been a mighty power. The question of papal infallibility has been, *par excellence*, *their* question ; they espoused it with all their indomitable energy and brought it to a successful issue, after toiling long to *prepare* the Church's mind for its dogmatic definition. It would have been wholly inconsistent with the principles of their order to acquiesce in any half-and-half views on the question of papal infallibility. The Jesuit is bound to yield a *blind obedience* to his superiors ; he undergoes a severe novitiate in which he is trained to this perfect submission of his will. He sees the highest perfection of piety in submitting his understanding to that of another ; the highest sacrifice, according to his views, and the sacrifice most acceptable to God, consists in surrendering intellect and will in blind subjection to another. The Jesuit order is modelled after the Roman hierarchy ; what the pope is in the Church, that the general is in the order. And as the highest perfection of the Jesuit consists in yielding his intellect and will *blindly* to the commands of his general, so he holds that every good member of the Church should likewise believe *blindly* whatever the pope teaches, and *unreservedly* obey what he commands.

The very nature of the Jesuit order necessarily *requires* extreme absolutism in the Church ; and every Jesuit *must* unavoidably be an ardent advocate of papal infallibility. In his eyes, every restriction of the pope's authority is an abomination ; every opposition to his teaching, Luciferian pride. According to him, every Christian is bound to submit his understanding and will to the pope ; and the bishops

especially ought to be foremost in this submission as patterns to their flocks. The Jesuit makes this sacrifice twice, first to the pope, then to his general.

Cardinal Pallavicini, one of their order, reduced the doctrine of the Jesuits, on this point, to a clear and definite formula when he taught, "that the collective Church is a body inanimate when alone and without the pope, but informed by the pope with a soul." (*Storia del Con. di Fr.* I. 103). "To this soul, therefore, *i. e.*, to the pope, belongs dominion over the whole Christian world; he is its monarch and lord, and his authority is the foundation, the uniting bond, and moving intelligence of all ecclesiastical government." (*Ibid.*, I. 107). The Infallibilist doctrine could not be expressed more definitely than by saying that the whole Christian world has but one thinking, moving, and volitional soul, and that soul the pope.

The Jesuits, therefore, became the out-and-out champions of the infallibility theory. Prior to the existence of the Jesuit order, the doctrine of papal infallibility was hazy, vague, and nebulous; the Jesuit theologians brought it into clear and definite shape and formulated it; and in their treatises on dogmatic theology it occupied a conspicuous place. It cannot be denied that the men who stood forth as its champions were eminent for their talents and learning; but it is not the less true that they were crafty and unscrupulous. Cardinal Bellarmine, the greatest Jesuit divine, after philosophizing at length on the nature of the pope's authority and its relation to the Church, has no better arguments for papal infallibility than those drawn from the pseudo-Isidorian forgeries and kindred fabrications, to which we referred in our last lecture. He made a copious use of these spurious documents. It is difficult to believe in the

entire good faith and sincerity of Bellarmine, because a man of his ability and scholarship could hardly have been so blindly credulous. However that may be, Bellarmine's arguments are based on forgeries, fabrications, and interpolations of the fathers. A rigorous censorship was established in Rome by which every work that pointed out or admitted that these testimonies were spurious, was condemned and suppressed. The *inquisition* and the *index librorum prohibitorum* were believed in Rome to be sufficiently powerful to suppress criticism and Church history, or, at least, to conceal from the mass of the clergy the fact that these documents were spurious.

In order to imbue the clergy with a high veneration for the papal see, and to instil into their minds the belief in infallibility, a number of ancient popes, with proper offices and lessons were introduced into the breviary; and all these pious readings were extracted from the papal fabrications and legends.

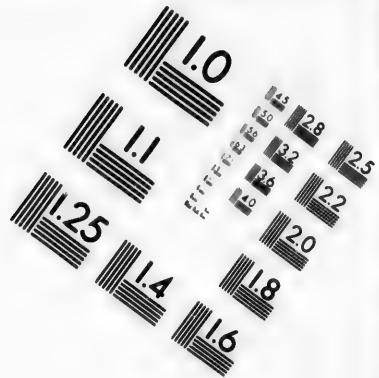
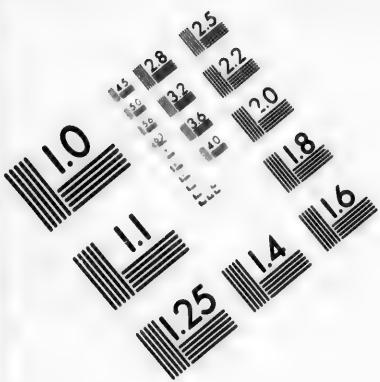
And as if this were not enough, Cardinal Baronius, the Jesuit Church-historian, who received authority from the pope to re-edit the Roman martyrology, manipulated this work in a truly Jesuitical manner, correcting those portions that might engender suspicions dangerous to papal absolutism and infallibility, and adding from spurious documents anything that might tend to the glorification of the papacy. In fact, this work, the "*Annals of the Church*," compiled by this talented and laborious Jesuit, forms a vast repertory of spurious passages and fictions. Other famous Jesuits, such as Maldonatus, Suarez, &c., &c., adopted the same tactics of defence, and made copious use of the pseudo-Isidorian decretals and other fictitious documents to prove their thesis of papal infallibility. Indeed, they seem to have observed

with slavish fidelity the maxim that "*the end justifies the means.*"

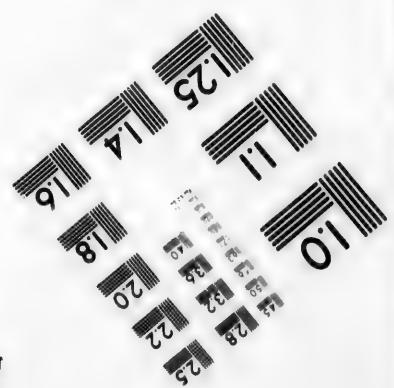
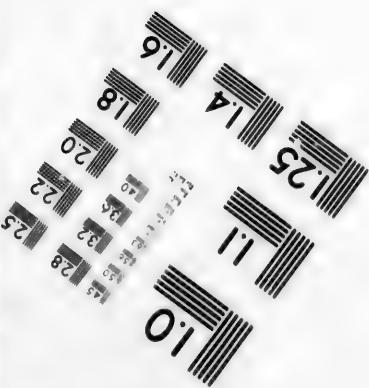
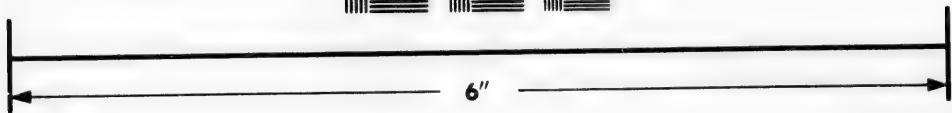
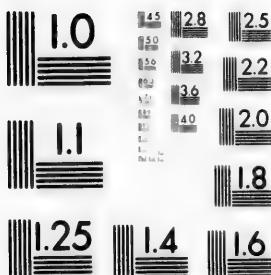
It may thus be easily explained how within a very short period after the spread of the Jesuit order the hypothesis of papal infallibility had made such rapid progress. Their advocacy of infallibility was infectious; they were active and energetic; and were regarded as the champions of Roman Catholicism, raised by a special providence to defend and uphold the Church against her enemies. They established colleges in all Roman Catholic countries, from a shrewd and far-seeing determination to attract the youth to their schools and to train them in their particular views on papal infallibility. Their text-books on dogmatic theology were of a superior character, and soon found their way into many clerical colleges and seminaries. No wonder, then, that the doctrine of infallibility spread very rapidly.

But there was one obstacle in the way of this infallibility-doctrine, which it was not easy to overcome. Every enquirer and reader of history discovered some papal decisions of a very doubtful and indefensible character; others contradicted older doctrines laid down by popes or generally received in the Church. How were these contradictions to be reconciled? It became necessary to fix upon some distinctive marks by which a really infallible decision of the pope might be recognized. The Jesuits were not at a loss. They introduced the famous distinction of papal decisions promulgated *ex cathedrâ*. Such decisions alone were to be considered infallible. We shall touch upon the difficulties with which this distinction is beset in another lecture.

But had the Jesuits all the field to themselves, without opposition, I do not say from Protestants, but from Roman Catholics? No; thinking Roman Catholics could not forget the corruptions of papal absolutism and the calamities



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with which it had afflicted the Church. The successors and descendants of those who had remedied the ills of the Church in the councils of Constance and Basle could not forget that these councils had clearly decreed the superiority of a general council over the pope, and that these decrees had been acknowledged and confirmed by the popes themselves. All nations, except the Italian and Spanish, which were ruled by the Jesuits and intimidated by the Inquisition, opposed the infallibility of the popes. These opponents of papal inerrancy were called Gallicans, because the French divines took the lead in this opposition and formulated its distinctive principles. On the other hand, they called the Infallibilists Ultramontanes.

Ever since the rise of the Jesuit order, a fierce theological war had gone on between the Gallican and Ultramontane schools. The Gallicans defended episcopal, and the Ultramontanes papal infallibility. Both were wrong. The error of both was generically the same; the disagreement was only specific. Both believed in the fiction of ecclesiastical infallibility; they differed merely in regard to the seat of that infallibility. According to the Gallicans, the bishops were infallible; in the Ultramontane view, the head of the Church enjoyed that gift; he is the *active* part and communicates his infallibility to the bishops who are the *passive* recipients.

The Jesuit hypothesis had many advantages over the Gallican theory. First, the advantage of logic. The Gallicans taught the infallibility of the episcopal body and the superiority of an Ecumenical council over the pope. The Ultramontanes would reply that if the collective body is infallible, the head which represents that body and forms its visible and permanent centre, must also be infallible. If the Gallicans maintained that the unity of the Church could be

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preserved and controversies of faith determined only by a general council, the Ultramontanes would urge the inexpediency and insufficiency of such a means, as being only periodic and intermittent, and therefore they contended that only an easily accessible, ever watchful, and infallible centre could compass these ends.

The Ultramontane doctrine had the pope himself on its side, which served considerably to increase the number of its adherents. Writers in favour of papal infallibility were sure to be rewarded with preferments of value and distinction, whilst Gallicans would be left out in the cold and looked upon with suspicion. It was usual to raise the most distinguished advocates of infallibility to the papal throne. The popes, wherever possible, filled vacant bishoprics with loyal Infallibilists. More persistently than ever, in encyclicals and bulls, they assumed the language and bearing of infallible heads and teachers of the Church, and the Roman Catholic world submissively bowed to their decisions and decrees. Every opportunity was taken to show forth to the world that the whole Church, with only an exception here and there, was unanimous in the belief that the pope was endowed with the prerogative of infallibility. On several occasions letters of the episcopate glorifying the papacy were collected into one volume and published to the world as so many documents establishing the universal belief in papal infallibility. The Ultramontanes proclaimed their doctrine as *proxima fidei*, while they stigmatised the Gallican theory as *proxima heresi*.

Besides the all-powerful aid of the pope, whose favour is of vast importance to every bishop, the Infallibilists had the great advantage of perfect unity of sentiment and aim. That talented and energetic body, the Jesuits, were the soul

of the whole movement. Perfectly united in themselves, they gathered all the scattered forces of the Church favourable to their doctrine into a united phalanx. Crafty and prescient, by training and experience, they knew well how to go about their work and accomplish their purpose. Their religious literature teemed with treatises on the papal prerogative which were scattered far and wide. The periodical press was almost everywhere under Ultramontane control and inspiration. The Gallicans, on the contrary, had no central point uniting their forces scattered throughout the different countries. Distance, sectional and national divisions precluded them from communicating with each other and concerting a common plan of opposition. They published occasionally incontrovertible works against the Ultramontane doctrine, but they were almost invariably placed on the *index librorum prohibitorum*, and did not obtain the circulation they deserved. They had not the immense resources of the Infallibilists, and therefore were not in a position to secure the control of the periodical literature. The civil governments, moreover, which had formerly espoused their cause, were influenced by the political exigencies of the time to court the favour of Rome and to conclude Concordats which were unfavourable to the progress of their opinions.

Nay, the very calamities which had befallen the Roman see since Napoleon I., instead of placing the infallibility doctrine in the background, had the effect of giving it greater prominence. The humiliation and sufferings of the supreme pontiff elicited the sympathy of the Roman Catholic world and made it favourably inclined toward the claims of the papacy. Where the pope, formerly, in his proud superiority, had been opposed, he was now revered.

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nected the revival of the Jesuit order. The decree for its suppression issued by Clement XIV. was abrogated by Pius VII., and the Jesuits were re-instated in their former position. With their public reappearance on the ecclesiastical stage, the infallibility movement received a new impetus.

The irreproachable lives and good character of the last few popes also favoured the movement. The former delinquencies of the papacy began to be forgotten, and good Roman Catholics, looking upon the pope as their *Most Holy Father*, would not needlessly contradict him.

The belief, moreover, gained ground that, if the divisions between the two schools of theology were removed, and the now almost universally admitted doctrine of papal infallibility raised to the dignity of a dogma of faith which all members of the Church must believe under pain of excommunication and damnation, the afflictions of the pope would come to an end. For all true Roman Catholics would hesitate before wounding the heart of the *infallible head* of the Church, on whose teaching their faith and salvation depended.

And if the pope were declared infallible by a general council, if he were sincerely believed to be the source of all orthodox belief, he must be independent of all political pressure, free from compulsion, untrammeled in the exercise of his high office ; in a word, he must be a temporal sovereign. For, how could the Roman Catholic world, composed as it is of many nations, of opposing interests and living under different forms of government, repose confidence in his teaching and spiritual government, if they suspected that he had been influenced by the government on which his peace and welfare as a citizen depended ? No ; if the pope is infallible —so they reasoned—he cannot be the citizen of any country ; his very office necessarily requires that he be an independent

sovereign. The states of the Church must be restored to him ; and it is the interest, nay the imperative duty of all Roman Catholic governments to support him in the peaceful possession of his temporal sovereignty. Thus the dogma of papal infallibility was held by the Ultramontanes to be inseparably connected with the temporal dominion of the pope. And this, we think, was one of the principal reasons why the Vatican council was convoked in 1870, and the hypothesis of infallibility raised to the dignity of a dogma binding on the conscience of all the members of the Church.

The Ultramontane party was victorious, and the Gallican school was forever snuffed out of existence. Pius IX. put the apex upon the pyramid of the Roman hierarchy by proclaiming his own infallibility in matters of faith and morals. He reached the goal of all the ambitious aspirations of his predecessors. Roman Catholicism was changed into popery pure and simple.

What became of the minority bishops, who were all men of superior attainments and had opposed the decree most strenuously during the council ? Did they secede from the Church of Rome ? Not a single one of them. They all submitted to the Vatican decrees. Yet, the facts and arguments which they submitted so clearly and forcibly, both before and during the council, against the personal infallibility of the pope more convincing and true. They could not be withdrawn or refuted. How is it, then, that these eminent men almost immediately changed sides and did violence to their conscientious convictions—the fruit, with many of them, of a thorough and life-long study ? It was because they believed in episcopal infallibility, that is the infallibility of an ecumenical council, and looking upon the Vatican council as an ecumenical one, they accepted, according to their own

theory, its decrees. They were at liberty to hold and defend their theory before and during the council, but not after its dogmatic utterance. Their maxim was, *concilium locutum est, causa finita est.* And in conformity with this maxim they submitted.

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## LECTURE VI.

### *THE VATICAN COUNCIL.—THE INFALLIBILITY DECREE IN THE LIGHT OF REASON AND TRADITION.*

THE Vatican council alone is in itself a complete refutation, in a nutshell, of the whole system of Roman Catholicism, both Gallican and Ultramontane. It gives, undoubtedly, the deathblow to Church-infallibility, the cardinal doctrine of the Church of Rome; for it *sustains a fiction* and evidently puts itself at variance with the older oecumenical councils which, by no means, professed to depend on the bishop of Rome for their validity, but, on the contrary, assumed his liability to error, and actually condemned a pope as a heretic. It completely annuls the decrees of the councils of Constance and Basle which were summoned to put an end to the long schism and to remedy the evils of the Church. Certainly but for them the papacy itself would have committed suicide, perishing by its own corruption. If oecumenical councils thus contradict each other, they cannot be looked upon as endowed with infallibility. Indeed, we find nowhere that our Lord has promised infallibility to oecumenical councils; His truth *does not depend on numbers and majorities*; both the Bible and history teach us the contrary.

But if the Vatican council stultifies the Gallican theory, it no less shows the falsehood of Ultramontanism. The very fact of this infallibility-decree having been made by a coun-

cil demolishes the Ultramontane hypothesis. For the decree is not aimed against heretics, but is merely intended to settle theological (not dogmatic) differences between the two leading schools, which not only existed in the Church, but were tolerated; and not only tolerated, but respected and honoured—each school counting alternately amongst its adherents the very occupants of the papal chair. Their differences did not destroy any fundamental doctrine of the Church of Rome; they were merely open questions on which the theologians could rove at full liberty. Now, how can a council declare that either the one or the other of *such* positions was *always, everywhere, and by all* held and believed as an article of faith, and that consequently the other thesis was always, everywhere, and by all believed to be heretical? In that case would not the Church have been guilty of tolerating heresy, in allowing the opposite doctrine to be openly and freely taught from her pulpits, and in her schools and seminaries? Would she not have been faithless to her duty of witness-bearer if she had allowed a cardinal doctrine like that of the infallibility of her head to be treated as an open question for so many centuries, and to remain so long an apple of discord among her talented and devoted sons?

But I hear Roman Catholics say that an opportune time had not hitherto arrived for asserting it; and that the mind of the Roman Catholic world was not ripe for the reception of such a definition.

Opportune time! Not ripe to believe a truth on which the very nature of the Church depends, on which all her faith, morals, and discipline hinge! Not ripe! That means, that the Ultramontanes, with ambitious or deluded hopes at their head, had not sufficiently planned, plotted, and schemed to spread their doctrine, to imbue men's minds with it, and

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to obtain a sufficient majority in a general council to raise it to the dignity of a dogma. Is it not, then, a sufficient condemnation of Ultramontanism that this important dogma should have been decreed so late as the latter part of the nineteenth century?

Moreover, if the pope, as they suppose, was believed from the beginning to be personally infallible, what need was there of the Vatican council? The assertion of the pope against gainsayers within the Church ought to have been sufficient. The calling together of a council for this purpose shows the weakness of the cause; it manifests the universal belief that hitherto all dogmatic decrees had emanated from an oecumenical council, and that the papal assertion alone would not be binding or irreformable in its nature. The necessity of such a council for such a purpose, in whatever light you may view it, destroys the pope's claim to infallibility. The two are incompatible. Indeed, if the pope had been believed, always, everywhere, and by all, to be infallible, what need would there ever have been of councils, at all? If modern Ultramontanism had always been the rule of the Church, we should never have heard of oecumenical councils and their paramount authority. The very fact that these councils have always enjoyed so much weight and authority in the Church of Rome condemns the Jesuit doctrine *ab limine*.

I said that the Vatican council sanctioned a fiction when it decreed the infallibility of the pope. Before proving this thesis let us first see what they mean by the new dogma; especially as they complain that Protestants misunderstand it.

They do not admit papal infallibility pure and simple, but attach to it several restrictions. In the first place, they do not deny that popes are sinful mortals; nay, they even admit

that they have sometimes led notoriously bad lives ; but they teach, that although sin darkens the understanding and produces error, yet, in the case of the popes, God, by a constant miracle, intervenes between cause and effect, severing the latter from the former, and thus enabling them to teach the truth to the whole world, however base and evil their lives may be. Thus the popes are *infallible*, although they are not *impeccable*.

Again, they do not believe the pope infallible in his *private* capacity. In the intercourse with the persons surrounding him, he may teach any kind of error, and yet be the infallible pope. It is only in his *public* teaching that he is believed to be endowed with infallibility. And this again they restrict within still narrower limits. Not every public address or letter of his is considered infallible, but only those public utterances, concerning *faith* and *morals*, which he issues *ex cathedrâ* are believed to be free from error.

And he is said to teach *ex cathedrâ* when he speaks as the universal teacher of the whole world, and addresses the whole Church, binding the consciences of all its members to accept his decrees with an absolute faith, under pain of excommunication and eternal damnation. Such *ex-cathedrâ* decrees are believed to possess the same absolute certainty as the Bible or the decrees of an ecumenical council. They are considered to be *independent* of the consent of the Church, nor do they require any further proof for their general acceptance. They are not only final but also irrevo-cable ; they can never be repealed or reformed ; like the words of God, "they shall never pass away." They have not only regard to the present and future, but they embrace also the *ex-cathedrâ* decisions of all the former popes from Peter to Pius IX.

As this infallibility-dogma is of cardinal importance, the arguments by which it is established should be clear and conclusive. But they are quite the reverse. They are mostly of an inferential character—drawn from the pretended primacy of St. Peter and the nature, end, and object of the Church. They say, for instance, that the Vicar of Christ must share in Christ's infallibility, otherwise he could not be the universal teacher of the Church, in whom all the members may repose implicit confidence. They argue from the nature and aim of the Church, *i. e.*, leading men to the knowledge of the saving truth, that she must have an ever-available organ by which this knowledge may be acquired. And as general councils are only periodical and intermittent, the head of the Church must needs be the infallible teacher.

Such and similar arguments have great effect with those whose minds are antecedently in favour of infallibility; but of themselves they do not possess a feather's weight. These philosophical arguments are not conclusive—*non sequitur illatio*. For the same end may be attained by other means than papal infallibility. We have seen in the first part of this course of lectures that the Word of God is the infallible element in the Church of Christ, and that the Holy Ghost will always guide believers into the truth. That the truth will always be accessible to the sincere enquirer wherever the Word of God is spread. Ecclesiasticism, however much you may endow it with infallibility, cannot save men. The Word of God, whatever Roman Catholics and infidels may assert to the contrary, is after all the only source of saving knowledge. There God has revealed Himself plainly enough for all purposes of salvation. Yet, this revelation does not supersede the necessity of faith and enquiry. God gives us the truth in such a way as to con-

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form with our mental constitution. He is the Author both of the Bible and of the human mind. It is not His will that we should *blindly* submit to the definitions and decrees of any mortal man. He has given us a rational mind to think and to judge, and a free will to accept or to refuse. The Jesuit doctrine of *blind faith and obedience* which, in our days, has been the real foundation of the Vatican decree is at variance with our spiritual nature and with the will and word of God. Christian faith is an *intelligent assent*. God wishes us "to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v., 21), "to try the spirits whether they are God" (1 John iv., 1), and to refuse obedience even to an angel from heaven if he preach a different gospel (Gal. i., 8). The Beræan Jews are recommended for searching the Scriptures daily whether those things were so (Acts xvii., 11). But the Vatican infallibility-definition destroys the industrious application and intelligent assent of our intellect and will in matters of faith. *It destroys our responsibility.*

Moreover, these philosophizing arguments of the infallibilists can have no weight with the serious and thoughtful Roman Catholic. He requires documents from tradition or history and from Scripture—the unwritten and written Word of God. For it has always been held by the Church that neither the pope nor the bishops can *create* dogmas, but that they are only the *trustees* and *witnesses* of the deposit of faith. According to their rule of faith, they must prove that this infallibility dogma has been believed *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*—always, everywhere, and by all.

Now, it can be conclusively proved that it lacks every one of these three marks of catholicity. Eminent Roman Catholic divines, of the Gallican school, before the Vatican

council, incontrovertibly refuted the modern papal claim, to our complete satisfaction.

We open the pages of ancient Church history and read them attentively, but nowhere do we find this doctrine ; nay, the more attentively and profoundly we prosecute our historical studies, the less we shall see of papal infallibility. We do not find it where undoubtedly it should be found. If this cardinal doctrine had always been believed, and occupied the prominent place it holds at present, it should be found in the *ancient creeds*. They were many, both general and local, and held an important place in the economy of the Church ; but we seek in vain therein for the doctrine of papal infallibility. All the catechumens should have been carefully instructed in regard to this corner-stone of the Christian faith, and firmly grounded and built up in it ; but we do not find the slightest mention of it in the ancient catechetical instructions written for their use.

If the pope had been believed to be infallible, what need, one may ask, would there have been of œcumical councils for the settlement of controversies of faith ? Yet, in the undivided Church we have eight of them ; and what councils ! Instead of the pope convoking them, they were convoked by the Greek emperors ; instead of presiding therein, the popes were not even present ; and as to the confirmation of the pope being necessary for the validity of their acts, no one dreamt of such a thing. It would have been an unheard of thing that the Roman bishop should, within the council, issue the decrees in his own name, *sacro approbante concilio*. No ; the councils acted altogether in their own name, and issued their decrees in the fulness of their own authority. They even *judged* the letters of the popes and approved or condemned them according to their merits or demerits. They

not only assumed the fallibility of the bishop of Rome, but the sixth ecumenical council (680) anathematized Honorius, pope of Rome, for officially teaching and abetting the Monothelite heresy, which anathema was signed not only by all the bishops, but even by the three legates of the pope, and was repeated in the seventh and eighth councils.

These councils were held in the East, and therefore present to us immediately and directly the teaching of the Greek Church. In no authentic document of that Church do we find the faintest trace of the doctrine of papal infallibility. The total absence of such documents in the most important branch of the Christian Church, during the first eight centuries, speaks volumes against modern papal pretensions.

Nor are the infallibilists more successful in their patristic researches, for the fathers knew nothing of this doctrine. At the very outset we must exclude all the Greek fathers, who in no sense whatever can be said to favour it. The Latin fathers, who are few and of later date, acknowledge in the bishop of Rome a patriarchal authority over the Western Churches, but no infallibility in teaching.

The African Church, the daughter of the missionary zeal of Rome, should surely have beheld in its bishop the infallible head of the Church. It was a flourishing Church and very zealous in the observance of discipline and for fidelity to right government. Its bishops were remarkable for their learning. The names of St. Cyprian and St. Augustine will for ever live in the memory of the Christian Church. Yet, this Church, like all the others, had a method of settling controversies of faith, altogether different from that of the modern papacy. They appealed to the catholic consent as ascertained by local and general councils.

True ; St. Cyprian, in his zeal for a visible and tangible unity, endeavoured in much that he wrote, to give the Roman see a conspicuous place among the Churches ; but he had no glimpse whatever of papal infallibility. The system of unity which he advocates is that of episcopal solidarity and equality ; and he stoutly opposed Pope Stephen's view of the validity of heretical baptism.

The Ultramontanes imagine that they find in the writings of the great St. Augustine proofs of the infallibility of the pope. They are greatly mistaken. He has written more about the government of the Church than all the other fathers put together, yet there is not a single chapter in his voluminous works in which he speaks of the supremacy, much less of the infallibility of the pope ; nay, we go further, and assert there is not even a single sentence that can be construed in favour of this doctrine. But what does his famous *dictum* mean : *Roma locuta est, causa finita est* ? Does it not mean that the pope is infallible ?

By no means. In the second volume of the works of St. Augustine, Nos. 175 and 176, we find two letters of the councils of Carthage and Mileve addressed to Innocent I., bishop of Rome, in which he is requested by the fathers of those councils to condemn the Pelagians. There is nothing in these letters which tends to show that they believed in the bishop of Rome as the infallible head of the Church. Indeed they would not have written to him at all if a particular circumstance had not impelled them to it. This circumstance we learn from the next letter No. 177, which Augustine and four other bishops, together with the fathers of the council, wrote to Pope Innocent. They had heard that, in the city of Rome, where Pelagius had lived for a considerable time, there were some who favoured his cause. They were afraid

that Innocent, led astray by the friends of Pelagius or misunderstanding his doctrine, would receive him into communion with his Church. After having received a favourable answer from Innocent, Augustine mentioned it incidentally in a sermon, No. 131, saying: "Already the transactions of two councils concerning this matter have been sent to the Apostolic see and an answer has been received. The controversy is ended; would that the error, too, were at an end" —*causa finita est, utinam aliquando error finiatur.* Thus the words *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*, belong to those striking general maxims or clinchers which were never uttered by those into whose mouths they are put. There is all the difference in the world, whether St. Augustine states, in sweeping terms, that by a judgment from Rome every dogmatic controversy is ended, or merely mentions incidentally in a sermon an occasional correspondence between the African bishops and Rome, and then declares that in this particular case the controversy may be considered as brought to an end. After the African bishops had condemned Pelagius in two councils, and after the transmarine Churches represented by the patriarch of Rome had given their assent to this judgment of the Africans, the Pelagian cause might be considered as ended, at least in the West. The error was so obvious that no further proceedings against it were deemed necessary. Yet, St. Augustine was mistaken. It was not until after its condemnation by the general council of Ephesus that the Pelagian controversy was finally settled.

If all the works of St. Augustine, with the exception of the above-mentioned three letters and the sermon No 131, had been lost, we might be induced to allow that he admits in the Roman pontiff a primacy in teaching. But such a primacy is far different from infallibility; although the

popes and their adherents have endeavoured to deduce the latter prerogative from the former. A head-teacher in religious matters may be useful for the speedy condemnation of errors, especially if he be in a central position where he is enabled to know the catholic consensus of the Church and where a plenary council can be called to correct any mistake into which he may fall. But St. Augustine does not admit such a primacy in teaching, much less the gift of infallibility. The fact is, passages excluding the primacy of the pope occur in his works in large masses, while texts which *may seem* to favour it are few and occur only incidentally.

Most assuredly the fathers knew of no such claimant to infallibility; otherwise there would have been a speedy end to their disputes with heretics; they would have applied to this oracle at Rome for an authoritative decree. It would have been the *mot d'ordre*; nothing would have been easier than to silence heretics by informing them that the pope taught differently. If papal infallibility had been the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* we should read much of it in the fathers. If there had always been a divine oracle in the Vatican, the writings of the fathers would wear a different colour, and the history of the Church would have taken an altogether different direction.

## LECTURE VII.

### *THE VATICAN DECREE IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY.*

ANCIENT Church history is not only silent about the infallibility of the pope, but it affords, on the contrary, abundant proofs that the pretended oracle on the seven hills was more than once a lying oracle. I have space merely to enumerate some of the papal errors and contradictions.

The decrees, letters, and writings of the popes contradict repeatedly the Roman Catholic teaching on the nature and administration of the sacraments. Thus Innocent I., and his successors, at least until Pope Gelasius I., taught that the sacrament of communion was necessary for the salvation of infants (Gelas. I. ep. ix). This doctrine was anathematized by the council of Trent. Nicholas I., in his letter to the Bulgarians, taught that baptism in the name of Christ alone was quite sufficient. Celestine III. loosened the marriage tie by declaring it dissolved if either party became heretical. Stephen II. allowed marriage with a slave girl to be dissolved. Nicholas II. taught the Capernaite doctrine in regard to the sacrament of the Eucharist. Eugenius IV. in his letter to the Armenians, taught several erroneous doctrines touching the validity of the sacraments.

It is a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church that ordination is a sacrament impressing on the soul an *indelible character*, which can neither be removed nor renewed. Hence

the maxim : "Once a priest, forever a priest." Re-ordination, therefore, has always been opposed in the Church as an heretical practice pregnant with calamitous consequences. But the popes, from the eighth century to the end of the middle ages, showed by their decrees and acts that they believed that the unworthiness, heresy, or simony of the ordaining bishop rendered the ordination null and void. The constant *ex-ordinations*, *re-ordinations* or *super-ordinations*, as they were called, threw the Church into a state of great confusion. If the popes had been infallible, they would not have acted as they did.

The student of history is acquainted with the pernicious errors into which the popes fell in regard to the relation between the papal authority and the secular power. Ever since the Hildebrandine era they have endeavoured to make the whole world a priest-kingdom. They taught that the pope has supreme authority not only in spiritual but also in temporal things ; that two swords are given him by Christ, the spiritual and the secular, the former to be wielded by the pope himself, the latter to be borne by the secular princes on behalf of the Church and at the will and pleasure of the pope ; that the pope has the power of deposing heretical and disobedient kings and absolving their subjects from the oath of allegiance ; that all secular power is derived from the pope, who may erect kingdoms and appoint kings. Roman Catholics cannot say that the popes exercised such enormous power by international law ; for they claimed it as pertaining to them by *divine right*. And herein lies the heresy of which they are guilty. Pope Gregory VII., who may be considered the great apostle of this pestilential doctrine, teaches it constantly in his epistles and in the Roman councils claim it as an inherent right of the pontifical power,

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and as being contained in the commission which Peter received from Christ of binding and loosing. The contemporary opponents of this doctrine called it the *novel heresy of Hildebrand*.

His successors, explaining the import of the divine commission, maintained that the right to direct, command, and judge in all temporal things had been conferred on them by the Son of God Himself *ratione peccati*, that is, in order to prevent and repress the commission of sin ; that Christ had given to Peter two swords, and that the secular sword or power ought to be subject to the spiritual one. They claimed this divine right, not as private persons, but in their public official capacity and by virtue of their apostolical authority, under pain of excommunication and eternal damnation. Thus Innocent III. affirmed, "the pontifical authority so much to exceed the royal power, as the sun doth the moon," and applies to the former the words of the Prophet (Jerem. i. 10) : "See, I have set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and pull down, to destroy and to throw down, &c." (Innocent III., in Decret. Gregor. Tit. 33, cap. v). And history shows with what a high hand he exercised this power which he taught that he had received *from on high*, and not by the law and consent of nations.

Pope Innocent IV. taught the same doctrine, when in the council of Lyons he excommunicated the emperor Frederick II., in the words : "We having about the foregoing and many other his wicked deeds had before a careful deliberation with our brethren and the holy council, seeing that we, although unworthy, do hold the place of Jesus Christ on earth, and that it was said unto us in the person of St. Peter the Apostle, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth'—

do show, denounce, and accordingly by sentence deprive the said prince ; absolving all who are held bound by oath of allegiance from such oath forever ; by Apostolical authority firmly prohibiting, that no man henceforth do obey or regard him as emperor or king ; and decreeing, that whosoever shall hereafter yield advice, or aid, or do honour to him as emperor or king, shall immediately be under the ban of excommunication." (P. Inn. IV., in Con. Lugd.) He, therefore, believed that he held the deposing power and the supreme control over temporal things, *by divine right*.

Boniface VIII. stretched this doctrine to the utmost limits when, in his famous bull *Unam Sanctam* addressed to the Universal Church, he said : " We declare, say, define, pronounce it *to be of necessity to salvation*, for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff." This subjection, according to his view, extends to all matters ; for he there speaks of a double sword, and asserts to himself jurisdiction over all temporal authorities. For "One sword," saith he, " must be under another, and the temporal authority must be subject to the spiritual power ; whence, if the earthly power doth go astray, it must be judged by the spiritual power." And these aphorisms he attempts to prove by texts from Scripture wonderfully expounded for that purpose.

Here we have, undoubtedly, even in the system of the minimizers, an *ex-cathedrâ* bull. Its object, therefore, must be a dogmatic definition, to be believed by the Church for all time to come. They cannot deny that it is intended to mark out the relation between the papal authority and the civil power, and involves the complete subjection of the latter to the former, so that the pope *jure divino* has authority over all kings and princes, and may depose them and absolve

subjects from their allegiance. Therefore this doctrine is to be believed as a truth revealed from God.

It is this dogma, principally, which excites the enmity and arouses the ire of modern society against the papacy. Hence Roman Catholic theologians, in order to escape, by any means, the difficulties arising out of the relation between modern public opinion and this doctrine, endeavour to explain away the dogmatic import of this famous bull of Boniface VIII. But they evidently do violence to the manifest connection of facts which induced the pope to issue it, and to the unmistakable import of its words. That it is a dogmatic bull was firmly believed and clearly taught by all former theologians. Suarez says: "The proposition that the pope possesses the power of deposing heretical and obstinate kings, or kings who, in their realm, are injurious in things appertaining to the well-being of the soul, is to be held and believed as a dogma of faith. For it is contained in the words of Christ addressed to Peter in a particular manner: Whatsoever thou shalt bind, &c., and Feed my sheep, &c., as the Church has always understood them, and as *Boniface VIII. in his bull Unam Sanctam has most plainly declared.*" (Suarez Defensio Fid. lib. VI., c. 8). Baronius says: "All do assent to it (the bull of Boniface VIII.) so that none dissenteth, who doth not by discord fall from the Church." The same Baronius and Lessius teach that what Gregory VI. published in the Roman council (concerning this doctrine) is sufficient to make it a dogma of faith. Bellarmine, in his tractate against William Barclay, asserts that the power of the Roman pontiff in temporal things is by no means a doubtful thing, but evident and clear to all Catholics; and among other proofs, he adduces the bull *Unam Sanctam*. He shows that we are taught by it that one sword

must be under another; and adds that Clement V., in the great synod of Vienne, did not revoke it, but rather admonished the faithful that it defined nothing new, but declared the old obligation by which men must obey the apostolic see and submit to its decrees. (Cap. III., p. 37, Rom. 1610).

But we do not mean to establish the dogmatical import of this bull merely by the opinions and arguments of theologians. For it is a known fact that all the popes until the seventeenth century dogmatically claimed supreme temporal authority over all nations and kingdoms as a divine right bestowed upon them by Christ Himself, and anathematized the contrary doctrine as heretical.

Thus Pope Pius V. begins his bull against Queen Elizabeth in these words: "He that reigneth on high, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth, hath committed the one Holy and Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation, to one alone on earth, namely, to Peter, prince of the Apostles, and to the Roman pontiff, successor of Peter, to be governed with a plenitude of power. This one he hath constituted prince over all nations and all kingdoms, that he might pluck up, destroy, dissipate, ruin, plant, and build." And in the same bull he declares that "he thereby deprives the queen of her pretended right to the kingdom, and of all dominion, dignity, and privilege whatsoever; and absolves all the nobles, subjects, and people of the kingdom, and whosoever else has sworn to her, from their oath, and all duty whatsoever, in regard to dominion, fidelity, and obedience." From this bull of excommunication it is evident that Pius V., a saintly pope, believed and taught the power of deposing kings by *divine right*.

Sixtus V., in his bull against Henry, king of Navarre, and the Prince of Condé, speaks thus: "The authority given

to St. Peter and his successors, by the immense power of the Eternal King, excels all the powers of earthly kings and princes; it passes uncontrollable sentence upon them all; and if it find any of them resisting God's ordinance, it takes more severe vengeance on them, casting them down from their thrones, though never so puissant, and tumbling them down to the lowest parts of the earth, as the ministers of aspiring Lucifer." And then he proceeds to thunder against them: "We deprive them and their posterity for ever of their dominions and kingdoms."

From what we have said it is abundantly evident that the popes taught this doctrine, *ex cathedrâ*, as a dogma of faith, irrevocable and unchangeable. And here Roman Catholics are in a difficult dilemma. They must hold such teaching to be either true or false. If they admit the latter, then they must also concede that the popes enunciating it fell into a damnable heresy. If, on the other hand, they believe it to be true, as according to their system they should, they place the papacy and the Church of which it is the head in a most odious position before the whole world. In that case they need not be astonished if every man's hand is raised against such an institution.

Nor can they escape from the horns of the dilemma by replying that such teaching was true so long as the then existing law of nations lasted, but that it has no force and value whatever in the changed state of modern international law. For those popes, in their utterances, had no regard to the circumstances of times and places; they spoke *ex cathedrâ* and enunciated general doctrines applicable to all times; they promulgated their supreme authority over temporal things as a *divine right*, inherent in the papacy, and conferred upon it by Christ Himself. And if they have it *jure divino*,

they possess it for all time. And if they cannot exercise it now without having the whole world in arms against them, they are at liberty to enforce it again whenever circumstances permit.

Not only here, but also in other teachings of mediæval and modern popes, sincere and intelligent Roman Catholics must feel themselves reduced to painful straits. The writings of these popes are a strange mixture of truth and error. Who will sift them and separate the one from the other? Who will dare to maintain that, in many of their official utterances, they have not fallen into egregious errors? The student of history must stand amazed at the bold declaration of the infallibilists, that the popes as popes have never fallen into any error against faith and morals. It is remarkable that the bolder their pretensions to absolute power and infallibility, the more gross were the errors into which the popes fell, especially in regard to the relations between Church and State. We find that those popes who did not dream of the prerogative of infallibility were less guilty of heresy than those who exalted their authority beyond measure.

History furnishes us with several instances where the old bishops of Rome were not faithful guardians of the deposit of faith. The apostasy of Liberius who, in order to purchase his return from exile, condemned Athanasius, the valiant champion of the orthodox faith, and subscribed an Arian creed (358) was always considered, until the infallibility-doctrine was formulated, a sufficient example that the popes were liable to error. In the controversies about grace and original sin which chiefly agitated the West, Pope Zosimus approved the heresy of Pelagius and Celestius which his predecessor Innocent I., and the African synods had condemned.

For several centuries the East was agitated by fierce controversies about the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Arianism was scarcely subdued, when Nestorianism arose, and this heresy was followed by Eutychianism and other important controversies. These religious agitations greatly disturbed the peace of the Greek empire. The emperors, in their efforts to restore peace, resorted to a policy of compromise. Thus the emperor Justinian I. was advised that the Eutychians or Monophysites would return to the Church, if Theodorus of Mopsuestia and his writings, the tractates of Theodoretus against the anathematism of Cyril, and the letter of Ibas to Maris the Persian were condemned. These three subjects of condemnation were called the *Three Chapters*. But although these writings contained the Nestorian heresy, many bishops were of opinion that the Three Chapters could not be condemned without injury to the authority of the council of Chalcedon which, in condemning the errors of Nestorius, refrained from inflicting any censure upon the persons of Theodorus, Theodoretus, and Ibas. Mennas, patriarch of Constantinople and other bishops subscribed the edict of the emperor condemning the Three Chapters, on condition that the bishop of Rome should likewise subscribe it. But Pope Vigilius hedged in this controversy. He thrice contradicted himself. First, he pronounced the Three Chapters orthodox (in 546); a year afterwards he condemned them; then again he returned to his first teaching and vacillated in a manner pitifully unworthy of an infallible teacher, during the fifth general council, which anathematized the fickle pope. He finally submitted to the decree of the council. But the Western bishops arose in indignation against him as a traitor to the faith of the council of Chalcedon and separated from his communion and a long schism in

the West was the consequence. From this it appears that the Church did not believe the pope to be endowed with the prerogative of infallibility. How deeply rooted the conviction of the pope's fallibility was, may be seen, among other documents of that time, from the letter of St. Columba, of Ireland, who wrote to Pope Boniface III. : "Vigila, pater, vigila, quia forte non bene vigilavit Vigilius, quem caput scandali illi clamant. Dolendum est et flendum, si in sede Apostolicâ fides Catholica non tenetur."\*

Not long afterwards another pope fell into heresy in a similar case of compromise. Heraclius, the Greek emperor, after having gained brilliant victories over the Persians and snatched from them Egypt and Syria, was anxious that the Monophysites should be united with the Church. They were very numerous in the conquered provinces ; in Egypt alone they numbered over fifteen millions. Some of their bishops asserted that they and their adherents were willing to profess that there were two natures in Christ, provided the Catholics admitted that there was only one operation and one will in Him. Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, thought that a union under some such compact might be effected, and Heraclius agreed. In the year 633, the Monophysites of Alexandria, called Theodosians after their former bishop, united with the Catholics, on condition that they might be allowed to profess only one human-divine (*ἓν ανθρώπινην*) operation in Christ. Cyrus, patriarch of Alexandria, showed the articles of union to Sophronius, a pious and learned monk, who highly disapproved of them, and as he could not obtain their abolition at Alexandria, he betook himself to Sergius. This prelate, fearing lest a public agita-

\*Watch, father, watch, for Vigilius (watcher), whom they call the head of this scandal, did not watch very well. It is to be regretted and lamented if the Catholic faith is not kept in the Apostolic see.

tion of this question might throw serious impediments in the way of his and the emperor's scheme of union, wrote to Cyrus counselling silence, as well on one as on two operations in Christ. While thus the Theodosians, according to the terms of union, were allowed to believe only in one operation, the Catholics were restrained from teaching two operations or rejecting the doctrine of one only operation. Shortly afterwards Sophronius was elected patriarch of Jerusalem. Sergius wrote to pope Honorius I., in order to obtain his approbation of what he had already done in the matter. He deserves credit for not concealing anything in this letter from the Roman pontiff, and for explaining accurately the whole bearing of the question. Honorius, in his letters to Sergius and the other two patriarchs, not only approves of the policy of silence, but clearly teaches the Monothelite error; nay, if we compare his letters with those of Sergius, we find that he surpasses that prelate in the explicitness of his erroneous teaching. These letters are a standing monument of the fallibility of the pope; and no fanciful exegesis can purge him of the stain of heresy.

To maintain that Honorius wrote these heretical letters only as a private person would be a strange ignoring of history. For Sergius by no means concealed from the pontiff the importance of the whole matter. A great scheme had been planned which aimed to bring back the great patriarchate of Alexandria to the unity of faith, the communion with the Church. Numerous Theodosians had already entered this union, and both Sergius and the Emperor anticipated that the rest of the Monophysites would follow their example. The question now was whether the concessions made to them were consonant with the Catholic faith. The patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria held that the

compromise was orthodox, but the patriarch of Jerusalem was of a different opinion. A schism was thus imminent in the East. All the circumstances of the question were such as to induce Honorius to proceed with the greatest caution but with the whole weight of his exalted position. He could not be ignorant of the fact that Sergius sought his assent in order to employ it against Sophronius and his party, and that he would use his letter as the authoritative decision of the Roman see, not as the private opinion of Honorius. The pope, being aware of all this, wrote his famous letter with the greatest care and after the gravest consideration, calling to his aid in its composition the services of the learned abbot, John Simpo. Thus it would be utterly absurd to look upon it as a mere private opinion of a certain Honorius who happened to be bishop of Rome.

What therefore shall we think of Pope Honorius? Was he a heretic? The sixth ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in 778, declared him so to be and anathematized him and his letter not only once, but repeatedly, and that in the strongest terms. The Roman see submitted to this condemnation. Pope Leo II. in his letter written in confirmation of the council severely censures the writings of Honorius. The seventh ecumenical council (in 787) and the eighth (in 869), repeated the sentence of excommunication against him. The popes not only confirmed the sentence of these three councils, but for three hundred years afterwards, in a solemn oath at their accession to the papal throne, accepted the decrees of the sixth council and pronounced "an eternal anathema" on the authors and abettors of the Monothelite heresy, among whom Honorius was expressly included. Even in the Roman breviary the memory of this condemnation was preserved until the six-

teenth century, for we read in the lection for the feast of St. Leo II., the 26th day of June : " In which synod were condemned Sergius, Cyrus, Honorius, Pyrrhus, &c., who asserted and predicted one will and operation in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus we have a fact as clear as noon-day that the whole Church, together with the pope, considered the occupants of the Roman see not only liable to fall into heresy, but that one of them was actually a heretic. The heresy of Honorius is as evident a fact as any in Church-history, although the Jesuits have made desperate efforts to demolish it. Baronius pronounces the acts of the council a downright forgery of the Greeks ; Bellarmine declares the letters of Honorius forgeries ; neither of them proffer a scintilla of evidence for his assertion. Having been compelled to give up this shift they have endeavoured since the middle of the last century, to explain the letters of Honorius in an orthodox sense. But the fact remains that Pope Honorius was a heretic.

Forgeries indeed ! The infallibilists are the men who make use of forgeries to establish their doctrine. We have spoken of these forgeries in one of the preceding lectures. The same spurious documents which were fabricated to establish papal absolutism were afterwards used to advance his claim to infallibility. The principles laid down in these forgeries formed the foundation of the mediæval papacy, became the basis of all the canon-law of the Church, entered into her very life, and completely changed her constitution. These spurious documents, having once gained a firm footing in the Church, were believed for centuries to be genuine, and it required a resolute criticism to expose their spurious origin. On these documents the doctrine of infallibility is based.

• One of the often recurring sayings of the pseudo-Isidorian

decretals is: "The Roman Church remains to the end free from the stain of heresy." With these materials in hand the Jesuits (as the authors of the learned and reliable work, "The Pope and the Council" conclusively prove) built up and developed their system of papal infallibility.

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## LECTURE VIII.

### THE VATICAN DECREE IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.

SCRIPTURE is the last source of arguments to which Roman Catholics appeal. As we saw in the first part of this course of lectures, tradition is *indispensable*, Scripture is merely *desirable* in proving any of their dogmas. But can they find arguments from Scripture to justify the Vatican decree?

The Old Testament is against them. The Jews had no infallible tribunal to which they appealed in any controversies and religious difficulties. The Scriptures were their rule of faith. Their high priest was not believed to possess the gift of infallibility. Was Caiaphas infallible when he declared our Lord guilty of blasphemy, because he professed to be the Son of God?

But can they prove their dogma from the writings of the New Testament? Dr. Newman says that "the long history of the contest for or against the pope's infallibility has been but a growing insight into the meaning of these three texts," namely, Matt. xvi., 16-19; John xxi., 15-17; Luke xxii., 32. He means that these three texts have been *developed*, and that the dogma of papal infallibility is the result of this development. But if so, the dogma must be contained in them as the conclusion is contained in the premisses, for no other kind of development is admissible. We con-

sidered these texts in one of the preceding lectures and found that they cannot be interpreted as conferring immediate and episcopal jurisdiction on St. Peter over the Apostles and the whole Church ; but let us make some further remarks.

The Roman Catholic rule of interpretation is restricted by the following article in the creed of Pius V., "Neither will I ever take and interpret them (the Scriptures) otherwise, than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers." They are bound therefore not to deviate from the unanimous consent of the fathers. But the infallibilists glaringly and unscrupulously transgress this cardinal rule of their Church. We challenge them to produce even one of the fathers interpreting these texts in the sense of papal infallibility. We know that this unanimous consent of the fathers is a fiction, except as regards the fundamental truths of Christianity. Is the orthodox interpretation of the Bible confined to the patristic centuries ? Has biblical exegesis been at a standstill since Gregory the Great, the last of the fathers ?

It is difficult to understand how the infallibilists extract their dogma from these texts. In regard to Matt. xvi., 18, they argue that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church," because she is built on Peter and his successors as on a rock ; if therefore the bishops of Rome, the successors of St. Peter should fall into heresy, Satan would prevail against the Church.

We answer, first, that between the conclusion and premisses of this argument there are many intermediate links which require proof, and we demonstrated, in a preceding lecture, that they cannot be proved. A thoughtful insight into this text will convince any unprejudiced thinker that the whole object of this dialogue is *faith in the divine Sonship*

of Christ, and He evidently intends to say that such a faith is a rock—the foundation on which His Church is built, and further that so long as this foundation on which the whole superstructure rests remains firm and intact, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And this faith is not infused into the Church by Peter and his successors; for it is the gift of God. Christ Himself, in the above text, says: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

In regard to John xxi., 15, they maintain that the words, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," signify feeding the whole flock with sound doctrine. Now, how could Peter and his successors do so, if in their official capacity they were liable to error?

We answer and have proved that the conversation between Christ and Peter, at the sea of Tiberias, was rather a humiliation than an exaltation of the latter. It was a renewal of his call to the Apostleship, which the Lord wished to make particularly impressive to him after his shameful denial. Besides, the same office of feeding the whole flock was given to all the other Apostles. What else means the commission, "Go, teach all nations"?

They believe they have a strong proof of their dogma in Luke xxii., 32, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." They say that Christ prayed that the faith of Peter and his successors fail not. Christ's prayer would have no efficacy, if the Roman pontiffs, the successors of Peter, could fall into dogmatic errors. How could they be said to strengthen their brethren in the faith if they themselves could fall from the faith into heresy?

We answer that this text, also, is rather a humiliation than an exaltation of Peter. Christ, in the immediately following verses, foretells him that he will deny Him thrice. He scolds him as it were, not to despair after his fall, like Judas, but to rise again, since He has prayed for him that his faith fail not. He shall not cease to be an Apostle, on account of his fall, but strengthen and comfort his brethren in the sore trials that await them. Nothing is said here of teaching, but only of supporting and strengthening the faith they already possessed, in order to keep them from falling and denying their Saviour. Thus the text is explained by the fathers; and Roman Catholics should interpret it according to their *unanimous consent*. Faith here, evidently, *does not* mean, as the infallibilists would have it, *orthodoxy* or assent to dogmas, but, as nearly always in the New Testament, trust in and attachment to, Christ. If the Roman Catholic interpretation were true, it would prove too much; it would suppose that the popes have fallen and been converted, like Peter. We know the former to be a fact, but we cannot vouch for the latter.

We are of a different opinion from Dr. Newman in regard to "the growing insight into these three texts through centuries," as confirming the dogma of infallibility. We are compelled to confess that the whole history of the papacy has given us a growing insight into the manner in which these sacred texts have been abused to establish an untenable, nay, a blasphemous, claim which cannot fail to issue ultimately in the ruin and downfall of the papacy.

We conclude this Lecture by some striking remarks of Dr. Schaff (Hist. of the Vat. Council, p. 30):

"The constant appeal of the Roman Church to Peter suggests a significant parallel. There is a spiritual Peter

and a carnal Simon, who are separated, indeed, by regeneration, yet after all, not so completely that the old nature does not occasionally re-appear in the new man."

"It was the spiritual Peter who forsook all to follow Christ; who first confessed him as the Son of God, and hence was called rock; who after his terrible fall wept bitterly; was re-instated and entrusted with the care of Christ's sheep; who, on the birthday of the Church, preached the first missionary sermon, and gathered in the three thousand converts; who in the Apostles' council protested against the narrow bigotry of the Judaizers, and stood up with Paul for the principle of salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ; who, in his epistles, warns all ministers against hierarchical pride, and exhibits a wonderful meekness, gentleness, and humility of spirit, showing that divine grace had overruled and sanctified to him even his fall; and who followed at last his master to the cross of martyrdom."

"It was the carnal Simon who presumed to divert his Lord from the path of suffering, and drew on him the rebuke 'Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block unto me, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men;' the Simon who, in mistaken zeal, used the sword and cut off the ear of Malchus; who proudly boasted of his unswerving fidelity to his Master, and yet a few hours afterwards denied Him thrice before a servant woman; who even after the Pentecostal illumination was overcome by his natural weakness, and from policy or fear of the Judaizing party was untrue to his better convictions, so as to draw on him the public rebuke of the younger Apostle of the Gentiles. The Romish legend of *Domine quo vadis* makes him relapse into his inconstancy even a day before his martyrdom, and memorializes it in a chapel outside of Rome."

"The reader may judge whether the history of the popes reflects more the character of the spiritual Peter, or the carnal Simon. If the Apostolic Church prophetically anticipates and foreshadows the whole course of Christian history, the temporary collision of Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, and Paul, the Apostle of the uncircumcision, at Antioch, is a significant type of the antagonism between Romanism and Protestantism, between the Church of the binding law and the Church of the free Gospel."

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## LECTURE IX.

### THEORY AND FACT.

WE have hitherto considered the whole question of infallibility, both episcopal and papal, examining the arguments on which its adherents rely, noticing its development, and reviewing its practical bearing upon Roman dogmas and discipline. And the conclusion we arrive at is, that we cannot help discovering a remarkable discrepancy between hypothesis and fact.

This discrepancy makes its appearance, at the very outset, in the arguments by which they endeavour to establish the infallibility dogma. They are not content with *moral certainty* in acquiring God's revealed truths, but they want *absolute certainty* or *infallibility*. And how can they prove this infallibility, but by making it rest upon a belief in Christianity itself which is necessarily of the nature of moral historical evidence? It is astonishing that the Roman Church with its cloud of learned theologians, profound philosophers, and shrewd thinkers, does not see that the conclusions of faith cannot be *logically* stronger than the amount of historical evidence on which the claims of Christianity itself are based? How can men accept a theory which is equivalent to the assumption that the inferences in a process of reasoning can be more certain than the premisses on which they rest? Let them try as they may, they cannot find pre-

misses which *logically* contain the infallibility-doctrine. The fact is, that in God's dealings with man, the acquisition of truth by means of long and patient struggle has been the universal law of human thought from the time when men first began to reason.

There is a strange contrast between the infallibility doctrine and its practical influence on the belief of the Church. Rome, by hypothesis, should be the most pure, when in fact, she is the most corrupt Church in Christendom, beyond the hope of reform, and corruptible *ad infinitum*.

Roman Catholics themselves have felt that *episcopal* infallibility by no means met the ends for which it was proposed. Will the dogma of *papal* inerrancy have better success? Will it be the panacea for all the ills of the Church, settling all controversies of faith, and removing every doubt? We foresee that the difficulties of Rome, instead of decreasing, will be multiplied, not only within her own bosom, but also in her relations with the non-Catholic world.

This point has been prominently brought forward in the recent controversy about the infallibility-question. A brief review, therefore, of this interesting debate in which the leading thinkers on both sides have been earnestly engaged may give us some insight into the real value and consequences of the papal infallibility-dogma.

The two prominent figures in this controversy are Mr. Gladstone and Dr. Newman. Protestant Churchmen rejoiced when they first heard that Mr. Gladstone had appeared as an antagonist of the papacy and the champion of Protestantism. Many were, no doubt, prejudiced against him by the vague reports that from time to time came to their ears of his extreme high-churchism and his Romeward tendencies. Perhaps his public policy in favour of the Irish Roman Catho-

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lics gave currency to these rumours. They were pleased, therefore, when his pamphlets made their appearance. And they had reason to be pleased, for he proved his thesis to the satisfaction of all fair-minded thinkers. His "*Vaticanism*" is a crushing reply to all who have entered the lists against him.

For Dr. Newman I have no feeling but that of sincere sympathy. I was a divinity student of Propaganda College, Rome, when he, shortly after having renounced Protestantism, entered that institution and remained there for nearly two years, in order to become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Romanism and to prepare for his re-ordination to the Romish priesthood. I attended the same lectures and was also present at his re-ordination. I had the pleasure of visiting him occasionally in his retreat in company with other students. Well do I remember his thoughtful countenance, his kindly smile and unostentatious humility. He eminently possessed what Roman Catholics call the *pietas fidei*. How different are men's minds and ways! While he and his associates joined the Church of Rome hoping to find peace there, others with equal sincerity left that Church, looking upon it as the work of man, and finding peace in evangelical religion. How many things of ecclesiastical importance have occurred since then! How has the Church of Rome changed even in that brief period!

Dr. Newman was not an Ultramontane; how then can he and others find peace in Rome after the Vatican definition? He, like many other honest souls, never expected the decree. But when it was passed he accepted it, because he was able to reason his private judgment into receiving it and to minimize it, that is, to whittle it down to an invisibly fine point, which cannot stand the test of practical application. Dr.

Newman is a minimizer and advocates the principle of minimizing "as necessary for a wise and cautious theology."

When papal infallibility was still an open question, Roman Catholics were divided into two large schools, the Gallican and Ultramontane. The Vatican council silenced for ever the Gallican school. But what became of the liberal-minded men who were imbued with its principles? Did they leave the Church? Only the brave band of Old Catholics had the courage to break off with Rome; the rest remained where they were. But have they become out-and-out Ultramontanes? No; they have found out a new path; they reduce papal infallibility to its *minimum*. On this account they are called *minimizers*, while those who advocate the importance of this gift and its practical bearings on all the departments of the Church's life go by the name of *maximizers*. In a word, the Vatican definition has still left ample room for open questions, and the camp of theologians is again divided into two great schools. The one includes all the liberal-minded Churchmen, and the other is composed of the Ultramontanes pure and simple.

And mark well that the very form and nature of the Vatican definition—now the corner-stone of the whole Roman Catholic creed—the difficulty of finding out real *ex-cathedra* decrees, and their slippery condition, have caused this new division within the Church. Here, then, we have a complete disproof of that boasted *uniformity in believing*, in the Church of Rome, which has attracted to her so many people impatient of the divine discipline of enquiry and responsibility.

Where, amidst the disputes of the *schola theologorum*, can the sincere and honest member of the Church find the *certain* voice of the living teacher, on which Rome predicates her

inciple of ministerial theology." An open question, in the schools, the council silenced became of the nature of its principles? A band of Old Rome; the rest became out-and-out a new path; &c. On this account who advocate bearings on all by the name of *theology* has still left of theologians is one includes all who is composed of

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boast of pre-eminence over all Churches and her taunts against Protestantism. Is not the procedure of these eminent *scholæ* a proof that they have no stronger certainty to offer than we? Rome's claim to infallibility is all a pretence. It involves greater labour to find out, by the minimizing tests, when the pope means to be infallible, than to find out, by Scripture and history, whether his utterances are true or false. And when you have taken the trouble to discover the former, you must still go through the difficult process of enquiring into the latter. After all, it would appear that a confiding world is to be still left in the dark as to the province and limit of that infallibility. The doctors to whom we would look for a *quasi* authoritative explanation are by no means at one. Some give us the *minimum*, others the *maximum* of papal authority.

But what does it matter! Roman Catholic divines of whatever school have no longer any claim to represent the papacy in its doctrines. Theology has altogether lost its former position. Strange contradiction! The *scholæ* have to find out first the very existence and then the meaning of a papal decree, and, after all, what are their arduous labours and subtle distinctions worth in determining such a certainty of faith as the Roman Church claims and requires? Nothing, absolutely nothing. "The question is simply now what the pope says. He can no longer speak by any agent whom it may hereafter be convenient to disavow; this difficulty is one inseparable from the late dogma. It is no longer *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus* which defines the Roman faith, but *quod hodie in Vaticano, a Domino Nostro Papa* is declared authoritative. No disclaimers on the part of any Romish doctor, however eminent, can have any force except as his individual understanding of the papal posi-

tion. It may be interesting to know what Dr. Newman, as a representative of English Romanism of a certain school, would like to think, but as a statement of the position of the Roman curia, nothing is gained from one or from a hundred similar treatises. That is the inherent fault of a monarchical despotism. In being reduced to a single will and head, it necessarily loses the efficient aid of all who are not ready to become the blind instruments of that centralized power. Manning and Newman are both out of the game. They can neither shape the policy nor bind the conscience of the Vatican"—(*Hartford Churchman*.)

The fact is, as Mr. Gladstone forcibly proves, "*the entire Christian religion, since the Vatican decree, is in the last resort placed in the breast of the pope.*" As the infallible and absolute monarch of the Church, he is neither bound by the definitions of the Church in faith and morals, for they are *another Scripture* and may be *interpreted* by him absolutely; nor by the Canon Law, for he is the supreme ecclesiastical lawgiver and may abolish or suspend any law at any time; nor by former declarations of the popes, for he will say that they did not speak *ex cathedrâ*; nor by the moral and divine law, by the commandments of God, or by the rules of the Gospel, for of all these the pope himself, by himself, is the supreme judge, without appeal.

The maximizing divines, as a matter of course, admit this thesis, but deny its injurious consequences by maintaining that the pope is protected by the Holy Spirit. They are not ashamed to avow their faith in this distasteful doctrine in its obvious meaning, nay they glory in having a living, easily accessible and permanent oracle at Rome to whom they willingly and cheerfully submit their mental liberty. They rejoice in being the blind and docile servants of the pope.

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But the minimizing theologians are of different opinion. They labour with all their might to retain some shred of their spiritual liberty. They are willing to believe the pope ; but only when he speaks the truth as contained in the deposit of faith. They are ready to obey him, but not blindly, and only when they can see that his commands are not contrary to the moral or divine law, or to the dictates of their own conscience. Hence they are at hand with their limitations and conditions by which they endeavour to restrain the absolutism of papal infallibility. Vain endeavour !

It would be utterly useless to break a lance with the maximizers. They are in favour with the pope and are in power. They embrace the dogma to its fullest extent, and, filled with fanatical pride, are deaf to fair argumentation.

We enter, therefore, the field with the minimizing theologians, and if we prove that their ground is untenable, we are entitled to conclude *à fortiori* that the position of the maximizers is also indefensible. Of course, we do not intend to review their arguments in favour of papal infallibility ; we have done this in the preceding lectures ; here we shall consider only those limitations and conditions, by which they endeavour to prove that the Vatican decree has not changed the constitution of their Church, and that they have not lost their mental liberty by submission to it.

Dr. Newman says, "I begin with a remark which suggests the drift of all I have to say about it (the Vatican definition). It is this : that so difficult a virtue is faith, even with the special grace of God, in proportion as the reason is exercised, so difficult is it to assent inwardly to propositions verified to us neither by reason nor experience, but depending for their reception on the word of the Church

as God's oracle, that she has ever shown the utmost care to contract, as far as possible, the range of truths and the sense of propositions of which she demands this absolute reception."

Yes, faith is a difficult virtue in the Roman system, and the difficulty is a fundamental one. It lies in the impossibility of giving a *logical* explanation of their act of faith. Every intelligent and conscientious Roman Catholic feels it. His God-given reasoning powers urge him to find out a logical genesis of his faith, and in attempting to do so, he is in a maze of perplexities. On the one hand, he is commanded to believe all the tenets of his Church, with an *absolute* certainty—without *any* fear of doubt whatever. He must believe that every single dogma defined by the Church and proposed for his belief is contained in Scripture and tradition, although he *does not* see it therein. On the other hand, his rational instinct is uneasy and dissatisfied; he would willingly enquire into the logical grounds of his belief, but he is afraid of yielding to the suggestions of doubt which are forbidden to him under pain of eternal damnation. Yes, he might *lose his faith*, and how then could he be saved? This terror prevents him from pursuing the truth and nothing but the truth, let the consequences be what they may. He throws himself on the bosom of a Church which informs him that he can and must believe in her with an absolute certainty, because she is infallible. He becomes her vassal, and imagines that he has found rest; and if there his logical instincts could be silenced, he would slumber on quietly to the end of his days. Many, no doubt, have succeeded in contracting their views and mental aspirations within the horizon of the Church—content to be always in spiritual swaddling-clothes and intellectual leading-strings. But it is

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unnatural thus to subdue the inquisitive nature of a thinking and rational being. He feels uneasy on the couch of Church-infallibility. He knows that there is something wanting to complete the logical genesis of his faith; that there must be something above and beyond the authority of the Church to invest his faith with *absolute* certainty and to dispel every apprehension of doubt. On what is this authority logically based? On what else *does* he base it, on what else *can* he base it but on the historical evidence of Christianity itself? This evidence, however, gives him only a moral or historical certainty. Where, then, is the logical foundation of *absolute* certainty for his act of faith? It is this discrepancy between the premisses and conclusion in the effort to explain the logical origin of absolute certainty in the act of faith, which renders the Roman Catholic believer restless and dissatisfied and causes him to shrink from any searching enquiry. There is a something in the conclusion for which the premisses do not account.

No wonder then that Dr. Newman should feel the difficulty of an act of faith. Has he obtained more certainty in the Church of Rome than he possessed before he joined it? Logically, it is impossible that he could.

It is on account of this difficulty, he thinks, that the Church "has ever shown the utmost care to contract, as far as possible, the range of truths and the sense of propositions, of which she demands this absolute reception." History does not confirm this assertion. On the contrary, we find that Rome from age to age has continually developed and added new dogmas of faith to the already existing ones. Compare the creed of Pius IV. with the ancient confessions of faith, and you will be convinced of this truth. She has always been prolific in dogmatic development. How often

has the circle of open questions been contracted by new dogmatic definitions! Instead of contracting, the Church of Rome enlarged the circle of articles of faith, *even when it was not necessary to do so*. What necessity was there for the dogma of the immaculate conception? What urgent need demanded the definition of papal infallibility, since the Church had done well without it for eighteen hundred years? Does this show a desire, on the part of the Church, "to contract the range" of articles of faith?

And since the popes were the principal cause of multiplying dogmatic definitions and decrees before 1870, what guarantee have we that, in the future, they will take into consideration the "difficulty" of the virtue of faith, and speak less frequently *ex cathedrâ*? None whatever. Formerly generations, even centuries passed away, in which the pontiffs issued no dogmatic bull or encyclical. But can you imagine that, in the time to come, there will be a single pope who will not more than once, during his pontificate, speak *ex cathedrâ*, if for no other purpose, than to enjoy the sweet exercise of his authority, and to remind the world that he is endowed with the gift of infallibility? Moreover, as in the very nature of things there will constantly arise new doubts and difficulties within the Church, will it not be *necessary* for this permanent living oracle to be uninterruptedly engaged in solving and subduing them by his authoritative voice? Besides, can we suppose that there will be no popes who, "intoxicated with their solitary greatness," will not be vain enough to render their pontificate memorable by some great dogmatic event?

The remark, therefore, of Dr. Newman, that the Church has always shown the strongest desire to contract the range of the *de fide* propositions is not only without foundation in

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history, but is also illusory as a basis of hope that the papacy will pursue a cautious policy hereafter. Yet, he grounds his justification of the minimizing process of the theologians upon this "difficulty of the act of faith," and on the consequent frugality in definition on the part of the Church. He says: "She only speaks when it is necessary to speak; but hardly has she declared magisterially some general principle, when she sets her theologians to work to explain her meaning in the concrete, by strict interpretation of its wording, by the illustration of its circumstances, and by the recognition of exceptions, in order to make it as tolerable as possible, and as little as possible a temptation to self-willed, independent, or wrongly-educated minds." And both here and at the end of this section of his pamphlet he pleads very hard for "a wise and gentle *minimism*."

We cannot help loving the gentle and charitable disposition of Dr. Newman, or feeling deeply for him; for his is the spirit of Christianity, not of Rome. The house has been set on fire by the pope and his advisers, but is it probable that men like Dr. Newman will be able to extinguish the flames by their "wise and gentle minimism?" And even if they succeeded now, is it not certain that future popes would again and again apply the incendiary torch to the edifice of the Church in many an ill-considered bull? Is not this minimism a faint exercise of mental liberty? Rome looks with suspicion on any symptoms of such liberty, since they may be the beginnings of rebellion. Minimism is not in favour with the popes, for it has always been their aim to have their authority maximized. The maximising, not the minimizing, theologians are successful in their career, so far as honour and preferment in the Church are concerned.

Dr. Newman seems to hope for much from the labours

of the *scholæ theologorum*, as if they could lighten the burden of faith with which the popes afflict the Church or save the little spark of mental liberty which their absolutism threatens to extinguish altogether. Vain hope! The opinions of these *scholæ*, from the very nature of the papal system, have no authoritative value; for all authority resides henceforth in the pope alone. Opinions which prevail to-day may be denounced to-morrow at the *fiat* of the Vatican. Convictions that may be the result of the laborious and profound studies of a life-time, may be anathematised with a suddenness that surpasses expectation, and men may be compelled, on pain of excommunication, to subscribe to doctrines which they formerly were permitted strenuously to oppose. However valuable, therefore, the opinions of the *scholæ* may have been in former times, they are valueless now that the Vatican decree has become the corner-stone of the Church. Besides, if the gift of infallibility has been bestowed upon the popes to enlighten the world in an accessible and absolutely certain way, why should there be any necessity of interposing the *scholæ* between the people and the papal utterances? Will the plain common sense of men be benefited by the "scrutinizing vigilance, acuteness, or subtlety of the *scholæ theologorum*?" The theologians are unintelligible, save to the initiated, for they have a method, a style, and a phraseology of their own. None but theologians are able to understand theologians. Does not all this tend to keep the people in darkness and ignorance?

Indeed, we believe that, in the future, there will be a dearth of really profound theologians in the Church of Rome. Since the Vatican definition theology has ceased to be a science. "Papal infallibility becomes not only a soft cushion on which the wearied or perplexed mind, as well of the

layman as of the theologian, may repose softly, and abandon itself to undisturbed slumber, but it supplies to the intellectual world in religious matters what our steam conveyances and electrical wires supply to the material world in the saving of time and labour." (*The Pope and the Council*, p. xxv.) Undoubtedly, this dogma must cripple all intellectual movement and scientific activity among Roman Catholic theologians.

## LECTURE X.

### *THE VATICAN DECREE CHANGES THE RELATION OF THE PAPACY TO THE CHURCH AND THE STATE.*

AFTER the preliminary remarks which we reviewed in our last lecture, Dr. Newman proceeds to minimize the Vatican definition. If we mistake not, his aim is to show that it is not such a formidable thing as others suppose it to be ; that it neither introduces a new constitution, nor contracts the scope of legitimate enquiry, nor deprives Roman Catholic churchmen of their mental liberty.

It is maintained that nothing is changed in the constitution of the Church; for the definition declares that "*the pope has the same infallibility which the Church has.*"

We answer that much is changed by this very assertion of the bull *Pastor Aeternus*. First, infallibility is claimed as before, but it is differently lodged, being transferred from the Church to the pope. Prior to 1870, neither the episcopate alone, nor the pope alone, was considered infallible, but both together. Now the pope's definitions in themselves, without the consent of the Church, are irreformable and must be received with an absolute and unwavering faith. The old Catholic rule of faith, enunciated by Vincentius Lirinensis, has virtually been abandoned, and papal dictation put in its place. The Church is a body, and the pope is now to be believed to be the moving soul of that body.

Who can fail to perceive that this definition transferred the highest power from a collective body to an individual? It ceases to be the same power. That which may, let us say for argument's sake, be safely committed to the whole Church, and the exercise of which is guarded by the inevitable conditions of action in a collective body, becomes an utterly different thing when in the custody of a single person. Is it the same thing in civil authority whether the supreme power is held to reside in a nation or in an absolute monarch? Is there no change when it is declared that henceforth all power shall reside in an autocrat?

All the former bulwarks provided in the definitions of the Church are swept away. The energy of conscience, the power of immutable Scripture, the guiding light of past history, the elimination of individual interests and errors, the correction of one set of views by another—all are gone. It is absurd to say that an individual prelate can or will concentrate these indispensable factors in himself.

Will any one venture to maintain that the head of the Church, since the Vatican council, stands on the same footing *in regard to princes and states?* He has taken the place of the Church in regard to them. However inconvenient and troublesome the Church's power may have been at times, still it was not impossible to adjust differences by compromise and to manage national Churches in a national spirit. In future it will become more and more difficult to do so. Every Church, and consequently every government, is directly and immediately subject to the interference of a foreign spiritual potentate who claims infallibility. How can governments make treaties with him, since they do not stand on a footing of equality with him? How can a government negotiate with a sovereign who claims infallibility and demands absolute obedience?

The assertion of the pope's infallibility, therefore, by the Vatican decrees, does make a serious change in the relations of Church and State. It places the pope in a different aspect towards the world. It places him in an altered attitude to all councils whatsoever, whether national or general. It effects this just as completely as the rise of the Roman emperors changed the power of the Roman senate. It is so regarded by the world in general; it must be felt to be so by the pontiffs themselves.

The phrase, then, of the Vatican decree, that "the pope has that same infallibility which the Church has," has introduced an entirely new constitution. It means that *the pope is the Church—la Chiesa sono io.*

And as Roman Catholics themselves do not pretend to maintain that the elevation of the pope to his exalted dignity changes his human nature, it is evident that his dogmatic definitions and decrees will greatly depend on his personal character. Does not the history of the papacy prove this fact beyond the shadow of a doubt? We cannot help perceiving that the personal character of each pope is stamped upon the letters and bulls which he issued. If we had no other means for acquiring a knowledge of his character, these productions would be a sufficient key to disclose it to our view. Any student of history may easily form an estimate of the characters of Hildebrand, Alexander III., Innocent III., Boniface VIII., and others from the official documents they issued. Their previous training and prejudices appear between the lines. If, for instance, they were monks, we may easily discover by the study of their writings to what order of monks they belonged, and by what monkish superstitions they were swayed.

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remark. The long pontificate of Pius IX. amply proves how his personal character influences all his speeches, letters, encyclical, and bulls. Pius is anxious to maintain his temporal dominion; hence the many documents bearing on this subject. He is permeated with an extraordinary devotion to the Virgin Mary; from her he expects succour in his troubles; hence his dogmatic decree of the Immaculate Conception. He is superstitious to a high degree; hence the winking madonnas, the multiplication of sacred shrines, the numerous pilgrimages, the miraculous relics and images, and the indulgences which he grants for idle and superstitious observances. He thinks a great deal of the piety of the middle ages, for he characterizes them as the Ages of Faith; his thoughts live and dwell in those ages and he longs to have the powers restored which the popes then enjoyed; hence the *syllabus* with its corresponding encyclical and bulls, which brought to light again the "rusty armour of the middle ages." He is an extreme Ultramontane, and personally believes in papal infallibility; hence the Vatican Decrees in which he imposed his rigid faith upon the whole world.

The personal character of the popes, henceforth to form an important element in shaping the creed of the Church of Rome, will be influenced to a considerable extent by the immediate surroundings of the papal chair. The pope, in issuing dogmatic decrees, will be guided by his counsellors. Are these to be trusted? Their choice depends on his personal predilections, and they may be retained or dismissed according to his capricious whims. Well-meaning Roman Catholics confess that there is a vast amount of intellectual and moral *malaria* in the atmosphere of the Vatican. And can we suppose that this noxious vapour will not insinuate itself into the judgment of the pope?

Yet since Church infallibility has been merged into papal infallibility, everything in faith and morals must emanate from this centre. Henceforth the whole Church will become *Italianized*. Attachments to national usage will be in bad odour at Rome ; Saxon sincerity, uprightness, and independence will be looked upon with suspicion ; Oriental rites and discipline will be interfered with as savouring of the independence of schismatic times gone by. Conformity to Italian observances will be introduced wherever practicable ; Italian casuistry will become the moral standard of the whole Church ; and deceit and untruthfulness will be engrafted on the character of other nations.

As Daniel O'Connell bequeathed his heart to Rome and his body to his native land ; so the heart of every staunch Roman Catholic belongs to a foreign potentate, whilst he may give the life-service of his worthless body to the country which he calls his own. I cannot see how genuine Christian patriotism can dwell in the breast of one whose heart beats supremely for Rome. The sincere Roman Catholic must admit a twofold loyalty—loyalty to Rome, loyalty to his own country—and to which of these two will he be likely to give the preference, whenever they come into conflict ? Surely, loyalty to the pope he is obliged to believe in as supreme, must and will prevail ; for the pope is his Church and the Church stands in the stead of Christ. Whoever will not hear the Church, *i.e.* the pope, let him be as a heathen man and a publican. He must obey God, *i.e.* the pope, rather than man.

Such, then, is the spirit of modern Roman Catholicism. The substitution of papal infallibility for Church infallibility—what else is the Vatican definition ?—has indeed changed considerably the civil *status* of Roman Catholic citizens. Do

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they deny that the pope is a foreign spiritual monarch ? Do they deny that they are in conscience bound to obey him unreservedly, and to believe, with an absolute certainty, his decrees in faith and morals ? Who can authoritatively define the domain of his power and prerogatives but the pope himself ? Do not all the questions of faith and morals include the whole of life, all the relations of man to God and to society ? Does not the pope's supreme authority include an universal guardianship over the legislature, the laws, and government of every country ? No staunch and intelligent Roman Catholic will venture to limit these questions, or to give them a negative answer. The minimizing of Dr. Newman and others will not avail here, for it is not practical. It is too subtle and ethereal for the Roman Catholic public, and it is in disfavor with Rome. When the pope speaks he means to be obeyed, and that under pain of the severest censures. The paragraph on the authority of the conscience in Dr. Newman's pamphlet is sublime music to Protestant ears, although it sounds strange to term the conscience the true Vicar of Christ. The pope will scarcely approve of such language. He will tell Dr. Newman that there is such a thing as an erroneous conscience which requires to be corrected ; that the conscience must be informed by the truth ; that he, the pope, is the infallible source of all moral and religious truth in the Church, and that therefore the conscience must be modeled after papal definitions and decisions. Dr. Newman's reasoning is only applicable to solitary cases here and there. The general Roman Catholic public forms practical judgments for the guidance of its conscience from the plain and obvious wording of papal encyclicals. Most of the members know nothing of the "acuteness of the *scholæ theologorum*," for it is beyond their mental reach. This

minimizing process in matters where papal decrees conflict with the laws and orders of the State appears to me, on the part of some, like the despairing cry of a patriotic heart ; and, on the part of others, like the cunning act of throwing fine dust into the adversary's eyes, as a method of defence. But it is of no avail in either case. The pope, although he may approve of the latter proceeding, where policy and prudence demand it, will severely censure and condemn the conscientious wail of patriotism in anguish.

There is no need of going back to past history ; do we not daily witness the pope's interference in the administration of civil governments, and the constant conflict between papal decrees and civil laws ? What else is the bull *In Coena Domini*, the *Syllabus*, with its corresponding authoritative documents, and other equally notorious bulls and encyclicals, but so many missiles from the Vatican hurled into the legitimate domain of the State ?

The contest between the papacy and the empire is raging fiercely in Germany, and why ? Is it because the State tramples under foot the laws of God and the rights of man ? No ; but because it disregards the *arbitrary* enactments of the pope ; because it demands freedom of action in its own proper sphere, untrammelled by the interference of any foreign potentate ; because it wishes to remove all occasion of disloyalty in any class whatever of its subjects ; because it desires to give fair play and mete out equal justice to every citizen ; because it demands the same liberty which, strange to say, the pope has granted to other governments. In point of fact the German empire concedes to its Roman Catholic subjects liberties and privileges which are denied them in other countries. Whence, then, that fierce struggle ? The secret of the whole contest is that the Ultramontanes of G

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many look back to the flesh-pots of the Middle Ages, and cannot brook the idea of a *Protestant Kaiser* at the head of the German empire. They are unable to dissociate in their mind the idea of *Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire* from the imperial dignity of Germany. In that empire the pope ruled supreme; but now the hated heretic is invested with the imperial purple. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.*

Let us pass over to other countries. Scarcely one remains undisturbed by papal interference. The pope fulminates excommunications without number against the Italians; first, because they exercised their right of choosing their own form of government, and yielded to their patriotic aspirations on behalf of national unity and freedom from clerical mis-government and vassalage; and afterwards, principally because they disbanded that formidable army of the pope and inciters of rebellion, I mean the numerous religious orders, those pest-houses of laziness and nurseries of superstition, confiscated their immense wealth, and converted it to national purposes. Now, why were the Vatican thunders more formidable when launched against Italy than in similar cases? When, for instance, the French drove Louis Philippe from his throne and established a republic, the pope blessed them and accepted the aid of their armies. When Louis Napoleon founded his throne on the ruins of the republic, the pope was his friend and called him the Eldest Son of the Church. Whence, then, his wrath when the Italians founded their kingdom? Because the papal states were absorbed. And had the inhabitants of these states no rights like other nations? Could they not change their government when they thought that a change would better their condition? The pope says No; and why? Because, forsooth, they are the *property* of the Church, the patrimony of St. Peter. We

do not blame the pope for endeavouring to keep his kingdom ; but let him do so by lawful temporal means. He has no right to use spiritual and ecclesiastical weapons to secure earthly sovereignty ; remembering that his kingdom is not of this world. His subjects stand to him in the same relationship as other peoples towards their sovereigns, and in no other. And as he does not venture to employ against others the severest weapons in the hands of the Church for changing their political and civil relations, why should he use them against his own subjects, when they prefer contributing their share to the unification of Italy and the welfare of their common country ? Why does he deem it his duty to employ his ecclesiastical censures only in favour of himself, and not also in behalf of other dethroned sovereigns ?

The fact is, the temporalities of the Church constitute one of the principal objects of care and solicitude to the pope and his hierarchy. This circumstance must be born in mind in order to understand fully the interference of the infallible papacy in secular governments. None will deny that the Church of Rome possesses, to an astonishing degree, the faculty of amassing property and wealth, and the more she amasses the more she craves. It is on the score of the temporalities of the Church more than on any other, that the State and the papacy will clash. There is a mixed domain. The pope and his bishops claim independent, exclusive, and absolute control over all, without interference on the part of the laity, while the State, in the interest of the whole country, refuses to permit the accumulation of Church property beyond a certain limit, nor permit its use for any purposes other than those which either directly or indirectly tend to the advancement of the people. Therefore the State demands an account of the manner in which the temporalities are employed, so as to

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secure their legitimate use. Hence the thunders of the Vatican are let loose against those unfortunate governments which dare to interfere with the temporalities of the Church.

We know of no other government that would have shown greater moderation in dealing with the pope than the Italian. The "*Statute of Guarantees*" in which provision is made for the free action, security, and independence of the pope, displays lavish generosity. Moreover, the government, desirous of establishing "a free Church in a free State," gave up all the ecclesiastical rights which it formerly possessed, reserving to itself only a certain amount of control over the temporalities of the Church. Yet the pope is implacable, he has nothing but censures against the government, its abettors and adherents.

I shall not speak further of the constant interference of the pope in the government or laws of other countries. Everywhere you find him complaining of the violation of his rights. And what rights are they? Are they inherent in Christianity? By no means. They are rights established by himself, emanating from priestly ambition and pride, such as complete exemption of the priesthood from the jurisdiction of the tribunals of the land, exemption from taxation, the exclusion of the laity from the administration of Church-temporalities, exclusive control in all matters pertaining to education, &c., &c. These *quasi* rights vary considerably in different countries. Thus in purely Roman Catholic countries the pope claims the right of persecuting the Protestants, while in Protestant countries he clamours for religious liberty. As he has been in the past, so he will be in the future, in constant embroil with every government in the world where he has a considerable number of faithful adherents.

And can it possibly be supposed that the pope's voice will have no influence upon their loyalty and general conduct? Since the Vatican council, the pope's voice *is* the Church's voice. There is consequently no alternative for Roman Catholic subjects but to obey their infallible chief. It would be preposterous to maintain that the Vatican decree effects no change in the status of Roman Catholics.

But this transfer of infallibility from the Church to the pope, or the complete identification of Church and papacy, produces its greatest change in the standing of the episcopate. Formerly, the gift of infallibility was believed to reside in the episcopal body, but now the "*ex cathedrā* definitions of the Roman pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church." Formerly, the bishops were believed to have a jurisdiction of their own in their diocese, but now the pope "enjoys ordinary and immediate power both over each and all Churches, and over each and all the pastors and the faithful." Each bishop, therefore, is a *mere creature* of the pope, depending altogether on his will; the pope may interfere in the administration of his see whenever he pleases and as he pleases; nothing can protect the bishop from the ill-will of the Roman curia, or the intrigues of the pope's favourites. His influence and vote in the councils of the Church amount to zero. His manhood and freedom have departed forever; he is nothing but a serf of the great pope of Rome. It is only necessary to flatter the slave and give him power over his fellow-slaves, and he will be a hard master indeed. Despotism in the head begets despotism in the officers.

We pity the poor people who, without knowing it and without even as yet feeling it, have thus changed the Church for the pope. Without doubt this despotic system has great

vitality, and will probably continue to trouble the world for generations and ages to come. And why? Because these slaves are willing slaves. They are well cared for, and fed with a certain kind of spiritual food that satisfies them; and therefore they become attached to their masters. Their spiritual life is devoid of uneasiness and trouble. They believe the food they receive to be good; they do not care whence it comes, whether from the Bible, or tradition, or the Church, or the pope. We do not deny that Rome has a system of doctrine still fruitful (with all its drawbacks) in instruction, consolation, and inward renewal. And as long as the priests are faithful in feeding the people with this doctrine, Rome will continue to be a power in the world.

But there is every probability that, in the succession of popes, this deposit of doctrines will grow more and more corrupt, so that finally it will be difficult to detect in it the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And we do not see how, since the Vatican council, the head of the Church could be reformed, if it should again become as corrupt as in the middle ages, especially during the long schism of anti-popes. Would a council like that of Constance be able to remedy the evil? No; such a council would be altogether contrary to the Vatican system. The Church has no power to rescue the papacy from the perdition brought about by its own corruption.

## LECTURE XI.

### *REVIEW OF THE RESTRICTIONS OF PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.*

LET us briefly review some other remarks of Dr. Newman. Comparing the infallibility of the Church and the pope, he says : "As by the teaching of the Church is understood, not the teaching of this or that bishop, but their united voice, and a council is the form the Church must take in order that all men may recognize what in fact she is teaching on any point in dispute, so in like manner, the pope must come before us in some special form or posture, if he is to be understood to be exercising his teaching office, and that form is called *ex cathedrâ*."

We remark, first, that in the Roman system the infallibility of the Church is *not confined* to a council ; not only the *ecclesia congregata in concilio*, but also the *ecclesia dispersa* is infallible ; and if one can find out the universal consent of the latter in regard to any doctrine, he is bound, according to Roman Catholic teaching, to hold it as *de fide*. If, therefore, the pope's infallibility be the same as that of the Church, and if the *ex cathedrâ* utterances correspond to the decrees of the council, he should not only be infallible when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*, but all his other utterances and manifestations touching the faith, made in his *public capacity*, should be believed as *de fide*, otherwise the

identity of his infallibility with that of the Church is not complete. This identity means that, as the faith of the Church, whether dispersed or assembled in council, should be the faith of its individual members, so the pope's faith, whether uttered *ex cathedrâ*, or ascertained in any other manner, should henceforth be the faith of the Roman Catholics.

Indeed, if the pope's infallibility be admitted at all as a rule of faith, it must be unconditional and unlimited by any subtle terms within which theologians may desire to confine it; in a word, it must be personal, like the attributes of the Deity, otherwise it will be utterly worthless for the purpose for which it is said to have been given. Whether they wish it or not, they cannot avoid making it a *purely personal* attribute. Their doctrine of investing only the *ex cathedra* definitions with infallibility does not mend the case; for it is left to himself to say *when* he speaks *ex cathedrâ*, and thus it becomes a perpetual personal power lodged in the man himself.

Moreover, it requires to be unlimited in regard to the matters it defines and decrees. If they say that it is confined to religious matters, they must also invest the pope with power to draw the line between secular and religious questions, and does not such a power make the domain of infallibility practically without limit? Roman Catholic theologians waste their ingenuity and lose their time in minimizing the Vatican dogma, and inventing limitations in order to conceal or efface its obnoxious features. We wonder that they do not see that their labour is in vain. In spite of their "wise and gentle minimism," the pope must and will claim and exercise a *personal* infallibility, untrammelled by any conditions which they may endeavour to impose.

"The distinction between a judgment pronounced *ex cathedrâ*, and a merely occasional or casual utterance is, indeed, a perfectly reasonable one, not only in the case of the pope, but of any bishop or professor. In other words, every one whose office it is to teach can, and will at times, speak off-hand and loosely on dogmatic and ethical questions, whereas, in his capacity of a public and official teacher, he pronounces deliberately, and with serious regard to the consequences of his teaching. No reasonable man will pretend that the remarks made by a pope in conversation are definitions of faith. But beyond this the distinction has no meaning. When a pope speaks publicly on a point of doctrine, either of his own accord, or in answer to questions addressed to him, he has spoken *ex cathedrâ*, for he was questioned as pope, and successor of other popes, and the mere fact that he has made his declaration publicly and in writing makes it an *ex cathedrâ* judgment. This holds good equally of every bishop. The moment any accidental or arbitrary condition is fixed, on which the *ex cathedrâ* nature of a papal decision is to depend, we enter the sphere of the private crotchetts of theologians, such as are wont to be devised, simply to meet the difficulties of the system. Of such notions, one is as good as another; they come and go, and are afterwards noted down. It is just as if one chose to say afterwards of a physician who had been consulted, and had given his opinion on a disease, that he had formed his diagnosis or prescribed his remedies as a private person, and not as a physician. As soon, therefore, as limitations are introduced, and the dogmatic judgments of the popes are divided into two classes, the *ex cathedrâ* and the personal ones, it is obvious that the sole ground for this arbitrary distinction lies in the fact that there are sure to be some inconvenient deci-

sions of popes which it is desirable to exempt from the privileges of infallibility generally asserted in other cases. Thus, for instance, Orsi maintains that Honorius composed the dogmatic letter he issued in reply to the Eastern patriarchs, and which was afterwards condemned as heretical by the sixth ecumenical council, only as a 'private teacher,' but the expression *doctor privatus*, when used of a pope, is like talking of wooden iron." (*The Pope and the Council*, page 328.)

Roman Catholics are not better off now than they were before the Vatican council. How will they distinguish between those definitions which are *ex cathedrâ*, and those which are not? Dr. Newman, continuing his comparison between papal infallibility, and the infallibility of the Church, says: "What is to be that moral *cathedra*, or teaching chair, in which the pope sits, when he is to be recognized as in the exercise of his infallible teaching? The new definition answers this question. He speaks *ex cathedrâ*, or infallibly, when he speaks, first, as the universal teacher; secondly, in the name, and with the authority of the Apostles; thirdly, on a point of faith and morals; fourthly, with the purpose of binding every member of the Church to accept and believe his decision." And then he proceeds to whittle down these conditions to the finest point, so that at last nothing tangible is left of the whole prerogative.

First, then, in order to exercise his infallibility, the pope must speak "as the universal teacher." But when does he speak in that capacity? Dr. Newman answers: "when he speaks to the whole world; . . . . accordingly orders which issue from him for the observance of particular countries, or political or religious classes, have no claim to be the utterances of his infallibility." Where, then, was papal infallibility

before the fourteenth century? "No single decree of a pope addressed to the whole Church is known for the first thousand years of Christian history, and even after the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the popes usually decided at councils on doctrinal questions. Boniface VIII.'s bull *Unam Sanctam*, in 1303, is the first addressed to the whole Church." (*The Pope and the Council*, page 331.) Was the gift of papal infallibility lying dormant for thirteen centuries? Were there no controversies to be settled, no heresies to be condemned, during that long period? The popes must have either neglected their duty, or not have been aware that they possessed the prerogative of inerrancy, or ignorant of the condition that they must address the whole Church in order to exercise the gift. Surely, the infallibilists will not maintain that the folios of papal writings before Boniface VIII. do not contain a grain of infallible teaching because they were not being addressed to the universal Church. This condition, therefore, of the *ex cathedrâ* decisions is not a test in regard to the past.

The fact is, they found a vast number of papal writings and utterances highly obnoxious to, and subversive of, their infallibility system. They had to get rid of these at any cost. Hence their invention of the *ex-cathedrâ* distinction and the still further limitation of the *ex-cathedrâ* definitions by other conditions. But in their zeal to accommodate their new system to the past teaching of the popes they overshot the mark, and instead of ~~adding~~ conditions that would eliminate only the obnoxious teaching, they inconsiderately threw overboard the whole in bulk. Perhaps they will give us a new edition of limiting conditions by which they may be enabled to save as much of the past as will suit their purposes.

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ably in order to bring it into unison with the rest of their system. If you compare the two Vatican decrees of the third and fourth chapters, you will find that the same "*supreme power in things which belong to faith and morals*" which in the third chapter is defined to be "*ordinary and immediate both over each and all the Churches, and over each and all the pastors and the faithful*," is declared in the fourth chapter to be endowed with infallibility. We are, therefore, of opinion that Dr. Newman is mistaken when he states that, according to the Vatican definition, the pope must address the *whole* Church in order to exercise the gift of infallibility. He is the universal teacher, not only when he issues his bulls and encyclicals to the whole Church, but also when he addresses, in his public capacity, each Church, each pastor, each faithful Catholic. The tenor of both chapters combined has evidently this meaning. Indeed, if he has any relation at all to particular Churches, individual pastors and faithful, it is that of universal pastor and teacher. It is only on account of this office that they apply to him, obey and believe him. Whenever, therefore, he addresses particular countries, Churches, or individuals, he discharges the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians—*omnium Christianorum pastoris et doctoris munere fungens*. It would be unreasonable to distinguish between his *public* acts, considering some of them *ex cathedrâ* and binding and others as quite open to debate and dispute. To have a *mere* universal teacher endowed with infallibility would be absurd. If there be any need of an infallible teacher, he is needed *in concreto*, that is, for *individual* cases and wants, *particular* Churches and countries. Such a *mere* universal infallibility might do well for the closet of the speculative theologian, but it would be too subtle and utterly useless for the practical guidance of Churches and

individuals. If we are not mistaken, Rome wants infallibility for practical purposes. The pope is pleased when he perceives that his teaching is believed by individual men and particular Churches. We conclude, therefore, that the first limitation of papal definitions, held by Dr. Newman and others, is not only against the nature of things, but conflicts also with the Vatican decrees.

And if such be the case, they must admit all the public papal documents, of whatever age, even the strange teaching of the mediæval popes, claiming the double sword, both secular and spiritual, over the whole Christian world, the power of deposing princes and of absolving subjects from the oath of allegiance, &c., &c. Indeed, they live and move in the middle ages, and would publicly admit the doctrines then taught by the popes, if modern society did not cry out against such teaching. In order to silence this cry, and to bring their theory, in some manner, into unison with the past, they are compelled to ignore history, or to falsify and adulterate it.

The other limiting conditions, adduced by Dr. Newman and others, do not remove the vagueness of the *ex-cathedrâ* definitions, nor do they render the pope less arbitrary. Thus, in regard to the second condition, that he is required to speak "in the name and with the authority of the Apostles," we find that the words *auctoritate Apostolicae Sedis*—"by the authority of the Apostolic See"—occur in almost every document that is issued from the Vatican; it is one of the prerogatives which the pope sets forth with an emphasis and in which he constantly glories. He is pope only in so far as he speaks and acts "in the name and with the authority of the Apostles." Now, in all his public documents, whether addressed to the whole Church or to particular churches, countries, and individuals, he cannot but speak and act *as pope*. Yet,

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the minimizers do not admit all the encyclicals and bulls which emanate from him as pope, or *auctoritate Apostoli*, as infallible *ex-cathedrā* utterances; they would have to add to their creed all the absurd and monstrous doctrines of the mediæval popes, for they were very fond of speaking *auctoritate Apostolice*.

The third condition states that the pope must speak “on a point of faith or morals”—a useless limitation. Who but the pope has to draw the line between secular and religious matters? May not all human doctrines and actions be brought, in some shape or other, within the domain of faith or morals? It is useless to say that all his definitions must be contained in Scripture or tradition. Is he not the only infallible keeper and interpreter of this *depositum*! He will tell you that, if his definitions are not *explicitly* expressed in Scripture and tradition, they are *implicitly* contained therein and legitimately *evolved* therefrom, and that he alone is the proper judge of the legitimacy of this development.

Nor is the fourth and last condition, namely, that *ex-cathedrā* definitions must be given “with the purpose of binding every member of the Church to accept and believe his decision,” of any greater value as a limitation. If the force of this condition lies in the words “*every member of the Church*,” in that case it is equivalent to the first one. For as a “universal teacher” “speaking to the whole world” he cannot but address “*every member of the Church*.” And if the force lies in the words “binding to accept and believe his decision,” then every papal document would be *ex-cathedrā*, for he on every occasion demands to be obeyed and believed. Does he not teach or direct in every such document? Why should he do so, unless he wanted to be obeyed and be.

lieved? And do not the members addressed consider it their duty to believe him, and to act according to his commands? We find that the weaker the reasons are which the popes assign for their teaching, the stronger the language they use to enforce faith and obedience.

Roman Catholic theologians feel that papal infallibility pure and simple, unconditional and unlimited by circumstances, space, and time, would be an absurdity and a monstrosity; nay, that it would be blasphemy, because it gives to sinful and weak man an attribute of the deity.

Hence their ingenuity in finding out conditions limiting this pretended gift. But they must find that all their labour is in vain. Every limitation involves their system in contradictions; and the more conditions they make, the more absurdities they connect with the infallibility of their popes. They have no choice left them between infallibility pure and simple, and the denial of it altogether. If they think that they can prove their infallibility hypothesis by Scripture, they must admit it pure and simple; for in the texts which they adduce on its behalf, there is no distinction between *ex-cathedrâ* and *not ex-cathedrâ* decisions. And if the popes are seated in the chair of Peter or of Christ as "the Scribes and Pharisees were seated in the chair of Moses," then Roman Catholics must "observe and do *all things whatsoever* they shall say to them." All these limiting conditions are arbitrary and of private invention, and every infallibilist therefore is at liberty to form his own opinion, restricting this new dogma and manifesting it for his own individual use. Unless they admit papal infallibility in all the fulness and perfection of the term, the new rule of faith is and remains among the dark and inexplicable problems of their theology.

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